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HISTORY

OF

THE HOLY BIBLE,

FROM THE

CREATION OF THE WORLD

TO THE

INCARNATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

P425

BY

JOHN FLEETWOOD, D.D.

With numerous . Aotes.



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HISTORY

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ARNATION OF OUR LORD JISUS OHR

JOHN FLEETWOOD, D.D.

PREFACE.

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THERE is a peculiar elegance as well as propriety in the title annexed to the sacred writings,—being emphatically designated THE BIBLE, or THE BOOK, thereby intimating its superiority to all other books, and the sublimity and importance of the subjects on which it treats.

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The remarks of too many Biblical commentators superabound with critical observations, while they are barren of useful and spiritual reflections, and are rather calculated to amuse curiosity than to promote piety. The greater part of writers, likewise, who have furnished us with an historical account of the Bible, have so perplexed the plain narrative with their own strange conjectures, that the latter have confused the former, and thus conjoined, they are by no means calculated to edify the serious reader.

The God of truth, willing to acquaint our sinful world with his mind and will, hath provided his Spirit to enlighten our understanding, and his written Word to bring those things which were transacted in bygone ages, and in places far remote, to our immediate view, in order to display his omnipotence, wisdom, and grace, and thus excite the veneration and gratitude of wondering man.

The writers of the Old and New Testaments agreeing in one and the same truth, their testimony is so much the more enforcing, as implying so many several acts of one and the same spirit, producing in different individuals one and the same effect, even the mystery of our salvation by Jesus Christ. For, though the different writers follow their own peculiar method

and order in the several parts they were inspired to write, yet there appears a perfect agreement upon the whole; as is evident from the clearest demonstration of the learned in all ages, who have bestowed much labour and extraordinary industry in comparing their testimonies.

The Old Testament is itself a system of all kinds of knowledge, civil and religious, moral and philosophical, and generally useful for the conduct of human life,—it being the chief repository from which the philosophers and legislators of all ages have drawn the choicest of their observations.

The excellency of sacred history will more evidently appear, if we compare it with the accounts of the best and most ancient heathen writers, both philosophers and historians. How futile and trifling are the researches and discoveries of the former, and the accounts of the latter, when compared with the glorious display of divine wisdom, the triumphs of divine grace, and the earnest of eternal glory contained in sacred writ? In this invaluable treasury of divine knowledge are comprised the whole of God's will and man's duty; and the Old Testament, upon a diligent search, will appear to have a most uniform tendency and design to be 'a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ;' as the history therein contained, and the facts therein related, typify and prophesy such things, as might give mankind assurance of such a Saviour, and distinguish him by such marks as might infallibly convince them at his appearance, that he was 'the very Christ, that Prophet that

should come into the world,' and that we are not 'to look for another.'

The design of religion being to make us wise for eternity, to give us true notions of God and ourselves, and to point out the path that leads to everlasting felicity, we cannot be too well acquainted with the sacred volume on which it is founded, or too well versed in the history which confirms it. To assist therefore the Christian reader in the right understanding of those things, on which depends his everlasting peace, we have taken pains to correct many neglects in our translation of the Bible, that have furnished wicked men with excuses, and libertines and atheists with matter of jesting.-It is certain, that one of the greatest favours God could have conferred on men in a state of misery and ignorance, was to inform them of their duty, and teach them the means of becoming happy: therefore there is nothing more worthy of a reasonable man, and especially of a Christian, than to apply himself to the study of those things which are revealed in the holy scriptures, since they were written for this very end.

To be careless or negligent in a matter of such moment is highly criminal, and an undoubted mark of irreligion and profaneness. Besides, infinite advantage may redound to the cause of truth, by making a single text plain and intelligible, and thereby overturning any of the pretended grounds of atheism and infidelity, dangerous error, superstitious foppery, or ridiculous invention. This end we presume will be answered in the course of our labours. as we have consulted the best commentators, and laid down plain and easy rules, whereby persons of the meanest capacity may observe the most material faults of all translations.

To render our plan more easy and fa- Word of God is TRUE.

miliar, we have ranged the whole into chapters, according as the different subjects and occurrences have required, and have carefully attended to the connection of events, in order to prove the authenticity of the history in general. To avoid perplexity, the historical part is carried on by itself, and the necessary remarks and observations are cast into notes at the bottom of the page; being assured, from experience, that remarks in the series of the narrative must distract the sense, and take off the pleasure and advantage of reading.-With respect to the chronology we have consulted Josephus, Rufinus, and other writers of good authority, and throughout each period connected the sacred and profane history. As from the time of Malachi, to the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there is a chasm of about four hundred years; to render the work complete, reference has been made to the best authors who have recorded the transactions of those times.

These, with our former labours, will furnish a complete history of the Bible, both Old and New Testament, bring the whole into one point of view, and exhibit a general display of the great work of man's salvation, from the time of its promise to our first parents till its accomplishment in the person of the blessed Jesus. As it is, we recommend it to the divine blessing, which is absolutely necessary to render it useful to the promotion of God's glory, and the interest and happiness of mankind; earnestly praying that it may confirm and build up sincere Christians of every denomination amongst us in their most holy faith, till the benefits of divine grace here shall be realized in eternal glory hereafter, when both believers and infidels shall have sensible demonstration that the



THE

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK 1.

FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE five books of Moses are collectively designated the Pentateuch, which, being a word of Greek original, literally signifies five books, or volumes. This portion of the inspired writings comprises an account of the creation of the world, and of the fall of man, a rapid sketch of the early history of the world, with a full detail of the Jewish system of ordinances,-a period of 2515 years, according to the vulgar computation, or of 3765, according to that of Dr Hales. "It is a wide description, gradually contracted; an account of one nation, preceded by a general sketch of the first state of mankind. The books are written in pure Hebrew, with an admirable diversity of style, always well adapted to the subject, yet characterised with the stamp of the same author; they are all evidently parts of the same work, and mutually strengthen and illustrate each other. They blend revelation and history in one point of view; furnish laws, and describe their execution, exhibit prophecies, and relate their accomplishment."*

The first book of the Pentateuch, which is called *Genesis*, signifies the Book of the Generation or Production, because it com-

mences with the generation or production of all things. "Although nothing is more certain than that this book was written by Moses, yet it is by no means agreed when he composed the history which it contains. Eusebius and some eminent critics after him have conjectured, that it was written while he kept the flocks of Jethro, his father-inlaw, in the wilderness of Midian. the more probable opinion is that of Theodoret, which has been adopted by Moldenhawer and most modern critics, viz. that Moses wrote this book after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai; for, previously to his receiving the divine call related in Exodus iii., he was only a private individual, and was not endued with the spirit of prophecy. Without that spirit he could not have recorded, with so much accuracy, the history of the creation, and the subsequent transactions to his own time: neither could he have foretold events then future, as in the predictions concerning the Messiah, and those respecting the descendants of Ishmael and the sons of Jacob; the verification and confirmation of which depended on circumstances, that had neither taken place nor could have happened at the time when the history was written in which they are recorded: but which circumstances, we

^{*} Bp. Gray's Key to the Old Testament, p. 76.

know, did take place exactly as they were foretold, and which may be said, even now, to have an actual accomplishment before our eyes. A third conjecture has been offered by some Jewish writers, after Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman, who suppose that God dictated to Moses all the contents of this book, during the first forty days that he was permitted to hold a communication with the Almighty on Mount Sinai, and that on his descent he committed the whole to writing. This hypothesis they found on Exodus xxiv. 12. where Jehovah says unto Moses,- 'Come up to me in the mount, and be thou there, and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law, and the precepts, which I have written to teach them:'-understanding by the tables, the decalogue; by the precepts, all the ceremonial and judicial ordinances; and by the law, all the other writings of Moses, whether historical or doctrinal. 'It is, however,' as a pious writer has well remarked, 'as impossible, as it is of little consequence, to determine which of these opinions is best founded; and it is sufficient for us to know, that Moses was assisted by the Spirit of infallible truth in the composition of this sacred work, which he deemed a proper introduction to the laws and judgments delivered in the subsequent books.'

"The book of Genesis comprises the history of about 2369 years according to the vulgar computation of time, or of 3619 years according to the larger computation of Dr Hales. Besides the history of the creation, it contains an account of the original innocence and fall of man; the propagation of mankind; the rise of religion; the general defection and corruption of the world; the deluge; the restoration of the world; the division and peopling of the earth; the call of Abraham, and the divine covenant with him; together with the first patriarchs, to the death of Joseph. This book also comprises some important prophecies respecting the Messiah. Gen. iii. 15. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14. and xlix. 10.

"The scope of the book of Genesis may be considered as two-fold:-1. To record the history of the world from the commencement of time; and 2. To relate the origin of the church, and the events which befell it during many ages. The design of Moses in this book will be better understood, if we consider the state of the world when the Pentateuch was written. Mankind was absorbed in the grossest idolatry, which for the most part had originated in the neglect, the perversion, or the misapprehension of certain truths that had once been universally known. Moses, therefore, commences his narrative by relating in simple language the truths thus disguised or perverted. In pursuance of this plan, he relates, in the book of Genesis, the true origin and history of all created things in opposition to the erroneous notions entertained by the heathen nations. especially by the Egyptians: the origin of sin, and of all moral and physical evil; the establishment of the knowledge and worship of the only true God among mankind; their declension into idolatry; the promise of the Messiah; together with the origin of the church, and her progress and condition for many ages. Further, it makes known to the Israelites the providential history of their ancestors, and the divine promises made to them; and shows them the reason why the Almighty chose Abraham and his posterity to be a peculiar people to the exclusion of all other nations, viz. that from them should spring the Messiah. This circumstance must be kept in view throughout the reading of this book, as it will illustrate many otherwise unaccountable circumstances there It was this hope that led Eve to exclaim,- 'I have gotten a man,-the Lord.' (Gen. iv. 1. Heb.) The polygamy of Lamech may be accounted for by the hope that the Messiah would be born of some of his posterity, as also the incest

CHAP. I.]

Sarah's impatience of her barrenness, Gen. xvi., the polygamy of Jacob, Gen. xxix., the consequent jealousies between Leah and Rachel, Gen. xxx., the jealousies between Ishmael and Isaac, and especially Rebekah's preference of Jacob to Esau. It was these jealousies, and these pretensions to the promise of the Messiah, that gave rise to the custom of calling God the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and not the God of Lot, Ishmael, and Esau, the promise having been particularly made and repeated to those three patriarchs."

"It is natural and unavoidable for us, who are but of yesterday, to inquire about those things which have been before us, and to form conjectures even about the original of all things: but our reason is evidently incompetent to inquiries of this kind; and uncertainty, contrariety, and absurdity, always bewildered the wisest of the heathens on this subject. However rational it is to conclude, that all things were at first created by the eternal, self-existent, and almighty God; yet man has in every age lamentably failed of drawing this conclusion: and after all, it is by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things, which are seen were not made of things which do appear:' Heb. xi. 3. Reason is indeed capable of approving, appropriating, and applying, the information conveyed to us by the word of God, but not of anticipating it. The knowledge imparted by revelation is useful and necessary: but nothing is mentioned about a past eternity,-that abyss which swallows up all our thought, and involves all our reflections and discourse in inextricable perplexity; for this could only have gratified curiosity, and increased our stock of barren notions. The Scriptures, in perfect harmony with the conclusions of our reason when soberly exercised, declare that God is 'from everlasting to everlasting.' All else had a beginning. With this the inspired historian opens his narra- use of the agency of his Son-Le Clerc.

of Lot's daughters, Gen. xix. 31-38., | tion, and, in most sublime abruptness, breaks forth, 'In the beginning:' as if he had said, 'This, O man, is enough for thee to know; here stop thy presumptuous inquiry; call back thy intruding thoughts from things too high for thee, and learn to adore thy Creator.'-The Scriptures are especially intended to teach us 'the knowledge of God;' which is done in the manner best suited to inform and affect us, by recording his works. From the creation of the world we learn 'his eternal power and Godhead;' and discern, in the things which he hath made, his infinite wisdom and goodness: while the simplicity and harmony, subsisting in the midst of the richest variety, lead the mind in the easiest manner, to conceive of the Creator, as 'the ONE LIVING and TRUE GOD,"*

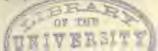
CHAPTER I.

The Creation of the World, and of Man .- The Fall of our first Parents, and their Expulsion from Paradise.

THE first instance of divine wisdom and power known to us mortals, was that great and stupendous work, the creation of the world. 'In the beginning,' says the inspired penman, 'God created the heaven and the earth;'+ that is, this planetary world, consisting of the earth and other planets, having the sun for their centre;

* Horne's Introduction, &c. vol. iv. pp. 3-5. and Scott's Commentary.

⁺ What our translators render 'in the beginning,' some learned men have made 'in wisdom God created the heaven and the earth;' not only because the Jerusalem Targum has it so, but because the psalmist, paraphrasing upon the works of the creation, breaks forth into this admiration, O Lord! how wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all, Ps. civ. 24. And again, exhorting us to give thanks unto the Lord for his manifold mercies, he adds, 'who by wisdom made the heavens,' Ps. cxxxvi. 5. where by wisdom, as some imagine, he means the Son of God, by whom, says the Evangelist, John i. 3. 'all by wholi, says the arrangement, solid it. S. things were made;' or 'all things created,' says the apostle, 'that are in heaven, and that are in the earth;' and therefore the meaning of the phrase must be, that God, in creating the world, made



all of which owe their origin to the power of a supreme Creator. These were not eternal, as absurdly imagined by some ancient philosophers, nor did they owe their origin to chance and accident, but derived their beauty, order, and regularity, from that God whose 'works are manifold,' and who 'in wisdom made them all.'

When the omnipotent Jehovah had surveyed the unformed earth and water, a confused, indigested heap, without form, without order, without regularity, and overspread with darkness, and had set about the great work, we are told that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,'* or, as it is interpreted by some learned commentators, brooded over the vast abyss, and impregnated, as well as rendered it capable of the disposition and order it was about to receive. By his almighty fiat God next produced light,+ which gave birth to the first day, and was succeeded by the first night. The Creator pronounced his approbation of the work of his hands, that "it was

good, and distinguished the light from the darkness, by calling the former by the appellation of day, and the latter by that of night. Thus wisely did the Almighty appoint the day and night constantly to succeed each other, in the same alternate course as we now perceive them, and to form together what we term a natural day; and the evening and the morning were the first day,' that is, by the course, or going round of this light, which we may suppose to have been commanded into being about noon, were formed an evening and a morning; so that at the ensuing noon the compass of a natural day of twenty-four hours, (the first day that existed,) was fully completed.

The work of the second day consisted in laying the foundations of the heaven, called by the name of firmament,‡ which keeps the waters of the clouds from those which are upon the earth. This done, God called all the expanse above this earth, whether it be the thicker parts that compose the region of the air, which we denominate the lower firmament, or the thinner or more subtile parts, to which we have given the appellation of the higher firmament, heaven, which concluded the work of the second day.

The creation yet consisted of nothing but light, the waters and the firmament, which divided the waters of the clouds from those upon the earth, that are distinguished by the names of seas, rivers, &c. On the third day, therefore, it pleased Almighty power and wisdom to reduce the waters within bounds, when he said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.' The voice of God was immediately obeyed;

^{*} Various are the opinions of commentators concerning this much controverted passage; some think the word הוא should have been translated wind, in this place, as it admits of that signification as well as the other; while others think by the Spirit of God may be understood the Spirit of the Messiah, agreeable to Isa. xi. 2, 'And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.' We think it evident from its production, that it was an emanation of divine power and energy, which by its moving on the chaotic mass conveyed into it a kind of fermentation, and prepared it for future exertion of the same power. M. le Clerc thinks it to be a metaphor taken from the hovering and fluttering of an eagle, or any other bird, over its young, but not its sitting over, or brooding upon them.

[†] The words used by the sacred historian are, 'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light;' which, as Longinus takes notice, is a truly lofty expression; and herein appears the wisdom of Moses, that he represents God like himself commanding things into being by his word, i.e. his will; for whenever we read the words he said, in the history of the creation, the meaning must be understood to be that he willed, for this is the admirable characteristic of the power of God, that with him to will is to effect, to determine is to perform.—See Patrick's Comment. and Bishop Pearson.

[†] The Hebrew word which we translate firmament, signifies expanse, or extension. This term is applied not only to the sky, but the atmosphere, and seems here particularly to refer to that extent of airy matter, or atmosphere, which encompasses the earth: and separates the clouds from the waters that are upon the earth, according to the seventh verse of the ast chapter of Genesis.

the waters separated from the surface of the earth, and on their retreat, the dry land appeared, which was called Earth, as was the gathering together of the waters, Seas.

The work of dividing the waters being thus completed, it received the divine approbation; but as the great Creator designed the earth for the future habitation of man and beast, being as yet barren and uncultivated, to render it fit for the intended inhabitants, he determined to bestow on it a prolific virtue, and endow it with the power of vegetation.

In the first place appeared the grass which covered the earth, and was designed as pasture for the brute creation; then succeeded flowers, plants, and trees, with all kinds of vegetables, in full growth, proportion, and maturity.* Though the first fruits of the earth were all of them produced without any seeds, by the bare word of God; yet to perpetuate the same, each kind contained its own seed, which, being sown in the earth, or falling when ripe from the plants themselves, should continue a succession to the end of the world. This likewise received his gracious approval. The vegetable tribe now covered the earth with a green and flowery carpet, and rendered it fit for the reception of its inhabitants; but the wise hand of Omnipotence, further to display his power and goodness, contracted the light which he had created the first day + and diffused

throughout the universe, into proper orbs, or those great luminaries of heaven, called sun and moon, one to rule the day, and the other the night; and to render these more useful by the order of their motion, he appointed them for signs, to distinguish the seasons, and to divide time, by which they have been, are, and ever will be, of essential benefit to mankind.

The atmosphere was now rarified, and the bodies of the heavenly luminaries became visible; by their influence on the plants, they promoted the offices of vegetation, finishing their revolutions in their proper periods of time. The almighty Creator having employed the first four days in the creation of things inanimate; on the fifth, he passed the omnipotent fiat for the production of living creatures, saying, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature ‡ that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.' In this day's work we may remark the gradual procedure of the Almighty, from the inanimate creation to fish and fowl, the least perfect species of animals, by which the different orders of created beings are linked together, and the various ranks of creatures make a regular system.

God likewise formed great whales, or all kinds of large fish, which the waters

I The word which is here translated, moving

creature, signifies any creeping animal, and is therefore not inapplicable to fish, which, though they have not feet, lie upon their bellies, and by the help of their fins, creep as it were through the

water.

There is a seeming contradiction between this passage and that in Gen. ii. 19, where it is said, 'Out of the ground God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air:' but

the contradiction will vanish, if we consider, that

+ Though Moses represents the luminaries as made on this day; yet it may not be inconsistent to observe, that he could mean no more than that they were enabled to hurst from their obscurity

and to become visible.—Rider.

course with their tails, Philo calls fowls the kin-

neither denies what the other affirms, though they speak differently; as the description of Moses by no means supposes that the earth did not bring forth fowl; besides, there are birds to the present day whose chief element is the water; and many of the learned are of opinion that they derive their origin, partly from the water, and partly from the earth, from whence and from their guiding their

dred of the fish .- Stackhouse.

^{*} It is not to be imagined, that the new created earth, with its abundant fruitfulness, could be produced according to the ordinary course of things in the space of twenty-four hours, and that without the assistance of the sun; but the Almighty by his omnipotent flat spoke them into existence and perfection in an instant: for he only spoke the word, and they were made, he commanded and they were ereated. 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit atter his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so,' Gen. i. 11.

produce, and on a survey of this creation perceived that what he had made entirely answered the end he proposed in their formation. The manifold shape of their different bodies, the infinite variety of their instincts and talents, but all so properly adapted to each particular species, and tending to the preservation of the creature possessed of them, and the continuation of its kind, amply declare the wisdom of the Creator, and prove that, according to his declaration, it is good.

God therefore gave them this blessing; Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters with fish, and the earth with fowl,' enduing them at the same time with a prolific virtue, thereby to propagate their species, preserve their particular kinds, and multiply the individuals of each; and this was the work of the fifth day.

Moreover it pleased Divine power and goodness to add to the fertility of the earth, and bring forth 'the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth after his kind;' and thus having made them complete, 'He saw that it was good.'*

The Almighty having thus rendered the world fit for the reception, sustenance, and delight of that creature to whom he intended to give the rule over it, to crown this great work, changes the commanding expression, let this or that be so, into, 'Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness; + a form of speech that represents the Divine being as acting more immediately himself, and entering on the master-piece of creation with a peculiar degree of deliberation. Designing the creature he was now about to form, for the government (under his auspicious providence) of this sublunary world, he enters upon it in a solemn manner, and having taken the resolution, declares in express terms the supremacy with which he determined to invest him; 'and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man,' into whose nostrils, though formed of the dust of the earth, he breathed the breath of life, and 'man became a living soul.'t

[Book L

wherein we may not read infiniteness of power, of skill, and must be forced to confess, that he which made the angels and stars of heaven, made also the vermin on the earth?—Hall's Contemplations.

† Some of the ancient fathers distinguish image from likeness, and think that image refers to the Divine nature, and likeness to the Divine virtues; but to us they seem to have one and the same meaning; because each of these expressions are frequently put in Scripture in lieu of both, which is evident from the next verse, and from Gen. v. 1. The words image and likeness principally imply a resemblance of the Divine graces, as in

ply a resemblance of the Divine graces, as in Col. iii. 10. where we are commanded to 'put on the new man, after the image of him that created him.'

‡ The account of the formation of Adam's body, as given by the Mahometans, is sufficiently absurd. They tell us, that after God, by long rains, had prepared the slime of the earth, out of which he was to form it, he sent the angel Gabriel, and commanded him, of seven lays of earth, to take out of each a handful;—that, upon Gabriel's coming to the Earth, he told her, that God had determined to extract that out of her bowels, whereof he proposed to make man, who was to be sovereign over all, and his vicegerent;—that surprised at the news, the Earth desired Gabriel to represent her fears to

^{*} The hugeness of this thy work, O God, is little inferior for admiration to the majesty of it. But, oh, what a glorious heaven is this which thou hast spread over our heads! With how precious a vault hast thou walled in this our inferior world! What worlds of light hast thou set above us! Those things which we see are wondrous; but those which we believe and see not are yet more. Thou dost but set out these unto view, to show us what there is within. How proportionable are thy works to thyself! Kings erect not cottages, but set forth their magnificence in sumptuous buildings; so hast thou done, O King of Glory! If the lowest pavement of that heaven of thine be so glorious, what shall we think of the better parts yet unseen? And if this sun of thine be of such brightness and majesty, oh! what is the glory of the Maker of it? And yet if some other of thy stars were let down as low as it, those other stars would be suns to us; which now thou hadst rather to have admired in their distance. And if such a sky be prepared for the use and benefit even of thine enemies also upon earth, how happy shall those eternal tabernacles be, which thou hast sequestered for thine own? How many millions of wonders doth the very face of the earth offer me? Which of these herbs, flowers, trees, leaves, seeds, fruits is there; what beast, what worm, wherein we may not see the footsteps of a Deity,

In this manner did the Almighty form man, and clothe him with superiority and honour, giving him dominion over all the other animals of the creation, and enduing him with knowledge and power. To prove also that Eve was created on the same day, though the precise manner of her formation is not taken notice of till the next chapter, the inspired penman, in his account of the sixth day's work, subjoins, 'male and female created he them.' The manner in which the universal Parent of nature formed our mother Eve is thus related. That having already formed man out of the dust of the earth, God declares his intention of providing him a partner; accordingly he caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and while he slept, took out one of his ribs,* closing up the flesh, made

God, that this creature, whom he was going to make in this manner, would one day rebel against him, and draw down his curse upon her;—that Ga-briel returned, and made a report to God of the Earth's remonstrances; but God, resolving to execute his design, despatched Michael, and afterwards Asraphel, with the same commission;—that these two angels returned, in like manner, to report the Earth's excuses, and absolute refusal to contribute to this work; whereupon he deputed Azrael, who, without saying any thing to the Earth, took a handful out of each of the seven different lays or beds, and carried it to a place in Arabia, between Mecca and Taief; -that after the angels had mixed and kneaded the earth, which Azrael brought, God with his own hand formed out of it a human statue, and having left it in the same place for some time to dry, not long after, communicating his spirit or enlivening breath, infused life and understanding into it; and clothing it in a wonderful dress, suitable to its dignity, com-manded the angels to fall prostrate before it, which Eblis, by whom they mean Lucifer, refusing to do, was immediately driven out of Paradise. N. B. The difference of the earth, employed in the formation of Adam, is of great service to the Mahometans, in explaining the different colours, and qualities of mankind, who are derived from it, some of whom are white, others black, others tawny, yellow, olive-coloured, and red; some of one humour, in-clination, and complexion, and others of a quite different.—Stackhouse, and Calmet's Dictionary on the word Adam.

* The atheists have formed many ridiculous queries concerning this point, and among others demanded, whether the rib, out of which the woman was formed, was a superfluous one? To this we shall only reply, that we know not the precise manner in which it was done. It is sufficient for us, the woman was formed out of the

the woman, and brought her to him. Adam no sooner received from the hand of the Almighty his new formed wife, than, self-convinced of the obligation that arose therefrom to the strictest friendship, the most cordial love, and sincere affection, he exclaimed with rapture:- 'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh:' and farther infers the duties that naturally result from hence, as the reunion of man and woman: 'therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.' Thus early was the divine institution of marriage, in a state of naked innocence, when our first parents had no guilt, and consequently no shame.+

The Almighty having thus finished the last, but most perfect parts of the creation, and joined them together, proceeds to give them his benediction, vesting them with the blessings of fruitfulness and dominion. 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and have dominion over it:' thus constituting man lord over all other creatures, and giving him the product of the whole earth for his sustenance and

substance of the man's body, and that such a method of forming her was more agreeable than any other to God's order and wisdom.

+ The words of Milton, upon this occasion, are extremely fine:

And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence: The earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill.
Joyous the birds; fresh gales, and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours, from the spicy shrub,
Disporting.

Nor can we pass by his episode upon marriage which, for its grave and majestic beauty, is inimitable.

Hail wedded love! mysterious law! true source Of human offspring! sole propriety
In paradise, of all things common else! By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men, Among the bestial herds to range; by thee (Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,) Relations dear, and all the charities Of father, son, and brother, first were known. Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets! Whose bed is undefil'd, and chaste pronounc'd—Here love his golden shafts employs; here lights His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings; Reigns here and revels—

pleasure. That he might be convinced of | the efficacy of the benediction, and the extent of the power with which he was vested, the Almighty is represented by the sacred historian as bringing to Adam every different beast of the field, and fowl of the air, in order to fix their distinct names. Accordingly Adam named them all, and this giving names or titles served two purposes; first, to distinguish each species from the rest; and secondly, to assure our first parents of the subjection to him in which the Almighty had placed Thus finished on the sixth day the stupendous work of creation, which, when the Creator surveyed, he pronounced to be 'very good.' On the seventh day God ended* all his works, and to impress mankind with a due sense of his wisdom and goodness in the creation, and the obligation due to him from his creatures, he appointed that day to be kept holy.+

• The original word signifies had ended, and if so rendered, would obviate the objection which may be drawn from the seeming contradiction between this passage and that which immediately follows, as it would then show, that as on the seventh day there remained nothing to be done, a translation that the greatest Hebrew masters will allow, therefore God rested, not from fatigue, but

voluntarily ceased from creating.

† Whether the institution of the Sabbath was from the beginning of the world, and one day in seven always observed by the patriarchs before the promulgation of the law; or whether the sanctification of the seventh day is related only by way of anticipation, as an ordinance not to take place until the introduction of the Jewish economy, is a matter of some debate among the learned, but I think with little or no reason; for, when we consider, that as soon as the sacred penman had said, 'God ended his work, and rested,' he adds immediately, in the words of the same tense, 'he bless-ed the seventh day, and sanctified it;' when we compare this passage in Genesis with the twenti-eth chapter of Exodus, wherein Moses speaks of God's blessing and sanctifying the Sabbath, not as an act then first done, but as what he had formerly done upon the creation of the world; when we remember, that all the patriarchs from Adam to Moses had set times for their solemn assemblies, and that these times were weekly, and of divine institution; that, upon the return of these weeksabbaths, very probably it was that Cain and Abel offered their respective sacrifices to God; and that Noah, the only righteous person among he antediluvians, Abraham, the most faithful

All things being then completely formed; to show his peculiar favour towards man, God placed him with his female partner in a most beautiful spot of ground called Eden, t in order to cultivate and keep it, allowing him the free use of every herb, fruit, and flower around him, excepting one which is called by the sacred historian, 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil;'§ nay, permitted him to eat of the tree of life, || to encourage and excite him to fidelity and obedience to his Maker; while, on the other hand, he annexes a dreadful penalty to the violation of the sacred injunction; 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' ** Thus

servant of God after the flood, and Job that perfect and upright man, who feared God, and eschewed evil, are all supposed to have observed it; we cannot but think, that the day, whereon the work of the creation was concluded, from the very beginning of time, was, every week, until men had corrupted their ways, kept holy, as being the birth-day of the world, as Philo styles it, and the universal festival of mankind.—Bedford's Scripture Chromology, and Patrick's Commentary.

‡ The word Eden in the Hebrew signifies pleasure, and indicates the beauty of the place in which their munificent Creator placed our first parents. It is the general emission of divines and

‡ The word Eden in the Hebrew signifies pleasure, and indicates the beauty of the place in which their munificent Creator placed our first parents. It is the general opinion of divines and philosophers, that the blissful spot was about Mesopotamia, that country being not far distant from Judea. There is a tradition of the fathers, that when Adam was expelled from Paradise, he came at last to Judea, died there, and was buried on a mount, which his posterity, because the head of the first man was laid there, called mount Calvary, where the great Redeemer was crucified for the expiation of the sin of Adam, the first and original transgressor. This opinion is attested by the most authentic of the fathers.

authentic of the fathers.

§ There are various opinions concerning the nature and properties of this tree, which was forbidden to our first parents: some think that it had a baneful quality, directly opposite to that of the tree of life, while others imagine that it is thus called by the historian, because after Adam and Eve had eaten of it, they became sensible of the good they had lost, and the evil they had incurred, by their disobedience.

The ancient fathers think this tree was so called, from its virtue to repair the animal spirits, till man should be translated from a corporeal life to a life spiritual and immortal: this opinion is supported by Moses, who tells us, Gen. iii. 22. 'That had man, even after the fall, eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived for ever.'

** The words in our version are, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' which seem to imply, that on the day that Adam should eat of the tree of knowledge, he should die, which were allowed to 'eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden,' but that on pain of

death they were forbidden to eat of the

fruit of 'the tree which is in the midst of

the garden;' than that father of lies, in

contradiction to the divine decree of the

God of truth, told her, she should 'not

surely die;' and farther, to gain upon her

desire already inflamed, added, that the

reason of its being forbidden was, that by

fixed in the most beauteous situtation, possessed of innocence, devoid of guilt, and free from care, the happiness of our first parents seems complete; but alas! their bliss was transient, their innocence fleeting, and their exemption from care comparatively short: Satan, the arch-fiend, having resolved to tamper with them, and make an effort to seduce them from their obedience to their Creator, and involve them together with himself in the ruins of apostasy. In order to accomplish this accursed design, by means of the serpent* as an instrument, he attacks the woman, through whom he thought afterwards to prevail with the man. He begins his vile insinuation with a question; 'Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' in order to learn from thence the certainty of the divine injunction. The woman had no sooner related the positive command of God, that they

eating of it they would ennoble their nature, and become as gods themselves. The infernal project succeeded; the woman had long viewed the fruit with great desire, till at length the beauty of its colour, and its miraculous power so inflamed her passions, that she ventured to pluck the fruit and eat her own death; forgetting the express command of her Maker, and unawed by the dreadful menaces denounced against disobedience. Not content with the ruin of herself, she offers the fatal fruit to her husband, who received it from her, and involveventually proved not so, because he lived many

ed himself in the common mortality. Their eyes were now opened indeed; but what to behold? The most aggravated folly: monstrous impiety! What to discover? their shame, and the fall and disgrace of their nature. Conscious guilt stared them in the face, and they were reduced to the poor subterfuge of concealing their nakedness; whereas in a state of innocence, like children, they were naked and were not ashamed. When our first parents continued in that blissful state, they no sooner heard the voice of the Lord approaching them than they ran to meet him, and with humble joy welcomed his gracious visits; but now their Maker was become their terror, their consciences painted their transgression in the blackest light, all hope was banished, and nothing remained but horror and despair. Now therefore, when they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, calling, Adam, where art thou? -- not by way of receiving information, but to render him more sensible of his transgression of the divine command ;-- fear came upon them,

years after; and therefore, as some observe very well, it should be rendered, 'thou shalt deserve to die without remission;' for the scripture frequently expresses by the future, not only what will come to pass, but also what ought to come to pass, to which purpose there is a very apposite text in 1 Kings ii. 37. where Solomon says to Shimei,—
'Go not forth thence,' viz. from Jerusalem, 'any whither; for in the day thou goest out, and passes over the brook Kidson Kidson and Jest Company and Je est over the brook Kidron, thou shalt surely die;' i. e. thou shalt deserve death without remission. For Solomon reserved to himself the power of punishing him when he should think fit; and in effect he did not put him to death the same day that he disobeyed, any more than God did put Adam to death the same day that he transgressed in eating the forbidden fruit. This seems to be a good solution: though some interpreters understand the prohibition as if God intended thereby to intimate to Adam the deadly quality of the forbidden fruit, whose poison was so very exquisite that on the very day he eat thereof it would cer-tainly have destroyed him, had not God's goodness interposed and restrained its violence. - See Essay for a New Translation, and Le Clerc's Comment. * It is here observable that Moses in his account of the fall, mentions not the agent, the devil, but only the instrument of the agent, the serpent. This is the opinion of the best commentators, who allege that the devil actually made use of the serpent to talk to Eve and to tempt her; that it was a real serpent, and not an imaginary one, that spoke to her; but it only spoke by means of the devil, who used that creature as fittest to be em-

ployed in that service.

and they hid themselves; the man answering with the utmost confusion, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' Confessing his nakedness, he confessed his guilt, of which his omniscient Creator immediately convicted him, and knowing he could alone obtain the knowledge of the same by eating the forbidden fruit, demanded of him the means by which he came to know that he was naked. Though Adam sought not to deny, he attempted to palliate his crime, and transfer the guilt upon his wife as the cause of the same; 'The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' When God remonstrated with her upon her criminal behaviour, she endeavoured to lay it upon the serpent: 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' The fallen pair having thus confessed their transgression, the Almighty immediately passed sentence upon the serpent, as the instrument employed by the great enemy of mankind to seduce them to the horrid commission of a most disingenuous crime; and to give posterity a sense of the heinous nature of sinning against God, as well as thus early make known his gracious design of raising up a Saviour from the seed of the woman, who should bring redemption to Israel, and vanquish the kingdom of sin and death. Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' *

Nor did the woman pass without awful tokens of the Divine displeasure; but was solemnly given to understand, that she entailed upon herself sorrow from conception, pain in childbirth, and subjection to her husband. 'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.'

The punishment of Adam consisted in a life of perpetual toil and slavery, in order to keep in due subjection those passions and appetites, to gratify which he had transgressed the divine command. 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread,+ till thou return unto the ground; for out of dust wast thou taken, and to dust shalt thou return.'

Having thus solemnly pronounced the awful decree, both on the cause of the offence, and the offenders themselves; God, to enhance their sense of the crime, and

^{*} That is, there shall subsist an irreconcileable hatred between the human and diabolical race; because, at the instigation of the latter, the former had incurred the penalty of death and the train of miseries which mortality entails. But the seed of the woman, Jesus, the mighty Saviour and Redeemer of his people, shall bruise the serpent's head, by making atonement to Divine justice for Adam's transgression, destroying the powers of

darkness, and obtaining eternal redemption for all who believe in him.

[†] From whence some conclude, that the earth, before the fall, brought forth spontaneously, (as several of the ancient poets have described the golden age,) and without any pains to cultivate it; as indeed there needed none, since all things, at first, were, by the Divine power, created in their full perfection. What labour would have been necessary in time, if man had continued innocent, we do not know; only we may observe from the words, that less pains would then have been required than men are now forced to take for their sustenance. The wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, however, are very conspicuous, in decreeing that toil and drudgery should be the consequence of departing from an easy and rational obedience; in making the earth less desirable to man, when his guilt had reduced him to the necessity of leaving it; and in keeping in order those passions and appetites, which had now broke loose from the restraint of reason, by subduing their impetuosity with hard labour.—Patrick's Commentary, and Revelation Examined.

the tokens of his resentment, expelled them from the blissful regions of Paradise, and man was consigned to toil and labour; and, to preserve the forbidden fruit sacred from the unhallowed hands of the corrupted race of mankind, cherubim * were placed at the east end of the garden. Thus fell our first parents, and thereby lost their original rectitude, introduced moral evil, and entailed sin, with all its dreadful concomitants, upon their posterity, who from that moment to the present have felt the dire effects of the fall; though, blessed be God, their state is not desperate, but capable of being repaired by the blood of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. +

The murder of Abel .- The construction of the Ark .- Noah's entry .- The universal deluge. -Exit of Noah and his family out of the Ark .- The wickedness of Ham.

THE fatal effects of the fall soon appeared after the expulsion of our first parents from the blissful mansions of Eden. The human race was increased by the birth of two sons to Eve, Cain ‡ and Abel, the latter of whom fell a victim to the envy and revenge of his brother. When these two brothers grew up to years of maturity, they followed different employments: Cain betook him to tillage, but Abel §

* Cherubim or angels, whose refulgence re-semble the vibrations of a flaming sword. They may also be considered as whatever tends to strike

to reduce them to their proper causes, and to draw from them such conclusions as they are qualified to yield; for the determination of causes must follow an acquaintance with their effects.-Horne's

Introd. vol. iv.

Besides, if it be granted that Moses was an inspired lawgiver, it becomes impossible to suppose that he wrote a fabulous account of the creation and fall of man, and delivered it as a divine revelation, because that would have been little, if at all, short of blasphemy; we must, therefore, believe this account to be true, or that it was declared and understood by the people, to whom it was addressed, to be allegorical. No such declaration was ever made; nor is there any mention of such an opinion being generally prevalent among the Jews in any early writing. The Rabbis in-deed, of later times, built a heap of absurd doctrines upon this history: but this proves, if it proves any thing, that their ancestors ever understood it as a literal and true account; and, in fact, the truth of every part of the narrative contained in the book of Genesis is positively confirmed by the constant testimony of a people who preserved a certain unmixed genealogy from father to son, through a long succession of ages: and by these people we are assured, that their ancestors ever did believe that this account, as far as it fell within human cognisance, had the authority of uninterrupted tradition from their first parent Adam, till it was written by the inspired pen of Moses .- Bishop Tomline.

I As it is mentioned by the sacred historian, that Eve, on the birth of Cain, exulted and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord, and as the term kana signifies possession, some have been inclined to think that Eve was persuaded that this son was the promised seed which was to break the serpent's head; but if that were the case,

time soon evinced her disappointment.

In The word Abel signifies vanity, either as it presaged the suddenness of his death, or that it denoted the vanity of mortality, to which all were now liable.

CHAPTER II.

fear and terror.

† From an imaginary difficulty in explaining the literal sense of the first three chapters of Genesis, (a difficulty, however, which exists not with the devout reader of the sacred volume.) some learned men, who admit the Pentateuch to have been written by Moses, have contended that the narrative of the creation and fall is not a recital of real events, but an ingenious philosophical mythos, or fable, invented by Moses after the example of ancient Greek writers, to give the greater weight to his legislative enactments! and designed to account for the origin of human evil, and also as an introduction to a history, great part of which they consider to be a mere poetic fiction. But the inventors of this fiction (for such only can we term it) have assumed that as proved which never had any existence; for the earliest Grecian cosmogony extant, namely, that of Hesiod, was not composed until at least five hundred and forty-five years after the death of Moses! Further, the style of these chapters, as, indeed of the whole book of Genesis, is strictly historical, and betrays no vestige whatever of allegorical or figurative description; this is so evident to any one that reads with attention, as to need no proof. And since this history was adapted to the comprehension of the commonest capacity, Moses speaks according to optical, not physical truth; that is, he describes the effects of creation optically, or as they would have appeared to the eye, and without any assign-ment of physical causes. In doing which he has not merely accommodated his narrative to the apprehension of mankind in an infant state of society, and employed a method of recital best suited to a vulgar capacity; but he thereby also satisfies an important requisition of experimental philosophy, viz. to describe effects accurately and faithfully, according to their sensible appearances; by which means the mind is enabled to receive a clear and distinct impression of those appearances, and thus

embarked in the pastoral life, being a Thus prevailed the inordinate passions, keeper of sheep.

Thus prevailed the inordinate passions, and produced the first murder, on no

It happened in process of time that each brought their offering to the Lord, according to the different occupations that they followed; Cain's being of the fruits of the ground, and Abel's that of the firstlings of his flock, with the fat thereof. The Lord, for causes then best known to himself, accepted Abel's offering, but rejected that of Cain, who, incensed on that account, discovers envy in his countenance, and was therefore reprimanded by God, who intimated that the cause of the rejection of his offering proceeded from his want of sincerity, assuring him, that if for the future he acted with integrity, he should be accepted, otherwise he should be treated as a delinquent and hypocrite. But this reprimand of his Maker had no effect upon Cain, who retained his envy and resentment against his innocent brother, and took the first opportunity to slav him. *

Like a flower of the field, young Abel sprang

and produced the first murder, on no other ground than rancour and malice, at the just dealing of an upright God, who preferred the offering of Abel, because it was presented with a heart more sincere, grateful, and humble, than that of Cain. The Almighty, as he called for his father Adam after his first transgression, in like manner demands of Cain where he was, not, as before observed, for information, but to strike him with guilt and shame: the criminal not only lied unto his Maker, but insolently asked, as if displeased with the question, Am I my brother's keeper?' But this attempt to evade confession availed not, for the Lord not only charged him with the murder of his brother, but convicted him of the same. What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.'

Cain, struck with the severity of this denunciation, convinced of the atrocious nature of his crime, and deploring the misery of his situation, exclaimed, 'My punishment is greater than I can hear!' + nevertheless he retained his rancorous and disobedient temper, and seems to

^{*} According to the English translation, Moses tells us, Gen. iv. 8. that Cain talked with Abel his brother. The words strictly signify, 'Cain said unto Abel his brother;' after which there is a blank space left in the Hebrew copies, as if something was wanting. The Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint supply this, by adding the words,—' Let us go into the fields;' but the Jerusland. salem Targum, and that of Jonathan, have supplied us with their whole conversation .- As they went along, 'I know, says Cain, that the world was created by the mercy of God, but it is not governed according to the fruit of our good works, and there is respect of persons in judgment. Why was thy oblation favourably accepted, when mine was rejected? Abel answered, and said unto Cain, The world was created in mercy, and is governed according to the fruits of our good works. There is no respect of persons in judgment; for my oblation was more favourably received, be-cause the fruit of my works was better, and more precious, than thine. Hereupon Cain in a fury breaks out, There is no judgment, nor judge, nor any other world; neither shall good men receive any reward, nor wicked men be punished. To which Abel replied, There is a judgment, and a judge, and another world, in which good men shall receive a reward, and wicked men be punished.' Upon which there ensued a quarrel, which ended in Abel's death. So that, according to this account, Abel suffered for the vindication of the truth, and was, in reality, the first martyr. -Esthius in Difficiliora loca.

up and flourished. Fair was the appearance, and sweet the odonr of his virtues. But a brother's envy, like a blighting wind, went over him, and smote him to the earth. The days of his pilgrimage were quickly ended, and he hasted away to an abiding city. Disinherited of the earthly paradise, from a wilderness grown over with thorns, he departed to the unfading gardens of everlasting delights. And so the holy Jesus, that King of saints, and prince of martyrs, made but a short stay among us, in the days of his flesh. The envy of his brethren pursued him even to death, and the fairest flower that ever bloomed on earth, borne down by the stormy tempest, bowed its head and died.—Jones.

[†] In most of the versions this passage 15 rendered, 'My offence is too great to obtain pardon;' but the Septuagint confirms the first sense.

sin than his punishment. Behold,' said he, 'thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth, and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me.' But the Almighty, reserving to himself the sole right of punishing Cain for this crime, and at the same time desirous of exciting in posterity proper apprehensions of murder, secured him against the dread of being himself slain, declaring that he would avenge his death seven-fold; thereby intimating, as hereafter declared in sacred writ, 'vengeance is mine, saith the Lord:' that is, it is not lawful for private persons of their own authority to kill such as deserve death. To give him assurance of his promise, God set a sign * or wonder before him, lest any finding him, should kill him, of which he was in danger, because the world being now near a hundred and thirty years old, it abounded with people descended from the sons and daughters of Adam. After this Cain departed from the presence of the Lord, and took up his abode in the land of Nod, to the eastward of Eden, beyond the country of Babylon, where he took a wife, who bare him a son called Enoch, after whom he named a city that he built in those parts. From the loins of Cain in regular succession was produced Jabal, who taught men to pitch tents, which were requisite for their subsistence and that of their cattle, before agriculture was reduced to an art; for though men fed cattle before, by the invention of tents he taught them how to remove to more fertile and fresh spots, after those which had

have been much less concerned for his been grazed on were no longer fit for subsin than his punishment. Behold, said sistence.

Jubal, the brother of Jabal, first invented musical instruments. Tubal-Cain was also descended from the same stock, being the son of Lamech by his wife Zillah, and was the first artificer in brass, iron, and other metals. This is the Mosaic account of Cain's descendants, which seems to have been recorded in order to inform posterity who first invented certain arts, and were afterwards infamous from their wicked practices. Our first parent having been deprived of his son Abel, by the malice and barbarity of his brother Cain, God was pleased to raise him up another son, whom he called Seth, or appointed.

From Seth sprang Enos, in whose days the sacred historian informs us, that men began to institute stated forms and ceremonies in the worship of Almighty God.

Moses, from this Seth, continues the line of Adam to ten generations before the flood, with the ages of those longlived antediluvians. Of all the posterity of Adam the most remarkable is Enoch, who for his eminent piety and virtue was exempted from mortality, being immediately, that is, without passing through the valley of the shadow of death, translated to the realms of bliss. Pious Enoch left behind him his son Methuselah, whose long life rendered him eminent in the list of patriarchs. From Methuselah sprang Lamech the father of Noah, at whose birth it is remarkable that his father presaged the extraordinary favours which God should bestow upon him; 'This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.' + His pre-

^{*} There are divers vague conjectures and absurd notions concerning the mark that God set upon Cain, but they all serve rather to perplex than clear up the passage; it is most reasonable to suppose that the text should be rendered, 'that God appointed to Cain a sign or token,' to assure him that none should kill him, according to the Septuagint.

[†] The substance of Lamech's prophecy, according to our translation, is this:—' He called his son Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning the work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed,' and the sense of learned men upon it hath been very different. Some are of opinion, that there is nothing prophetical in this declaration of Lamech's, and that the only cause of his rejoicing was to see

and preserving it from perishing.

their constitution from a temperate life, and the advanced years in which they begat children, the number of inhabitants before the flood will appear to be very numerous. Hence it came to pass that the families of Cain and Seth began to enter into nuptial alliances; for, though for a long time the posterity of Seth shunned converse with the offspring of Cain, on account of their cruel disposition; yet when the world grew very populous, the sons of the righteous.* shook off their former reserve, and entertained a criminal desire for the offspring of Cain, called by Moses, 'the daughters of men.' This desire being indulged, in course of time prevailed on the sons of God, or family

+ The following observations from Stackhouse apply to a variety of passages in the sacred vo-lume, and are well worthy of the attention of the reader: "When the holy scriptures speak of God, they ascribe hands, and eyes, and feet to him; not that he has any of these members, according to the literal signification; but the meaning is, that he has a power to execute all those acts, to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental: that is, he can converse with men, as well as if he had a tongue or mouth; can discern all that we do or say, as perfectly as if he had eyes and ears; and can reach us as well as if he had hands or feet, &c. In like manner, the scripture frequently represents him as affected with such passions as we perceive in ourselves; namely, as angry and pleased, loving and hating, repenting and grieving, &c. and yet upon reflection we cannot suppose that any of these passions can *literally* affect the Divine na-ture; and therefore the meaning is, that he will as certainly punish the wicked, as if he were inflamed with the passion of anger against them; as infallibly reward the good, as we will those for whom we have a particular affection: and that, when he

finds any alteration in his creatures, either for the

better or the worse, he will as surely change his dispensations towards them, as if he really repent-ed or changed his mind. It is by way of analogy

and comparison therefore, that the nature and pas-

sions of men are ascribed to God: so that when he is

said to repent or grieve, the meaning must be, not that he perceived any thing that he was ignorant

of before, to give him any uneasiness; (for 'known

unto God are all his works from the beginning;')

but only that he altered his conduct with regard to men, as they varied in their behaviour towards him, just as we are wont to do when we are moved

by any of these passions and changes of affection."

a son born, who might in time be assisting to him in the toil of cultivating the ground. But in this there is nothing particular: in this sense Lamech's words may be applied by every father, at the birth of every son; nor can we conceive why a peculiar name should be given Noah, if there was no particular reason for it. The Jewish interpreters generally expound it thus, 'He shall make our labour in tilling the ground more easy to us,' in that he shall be the inventor of several proper tools, and instruments of husbandry, to abate the toil and labour of tillage: and some will tell us, that he therefore received his name, because he first invented the art of making wine, a liquor that cheers the heart, and makes man forget sorrow and trouble. But the invention of the fit tools for tillage, after that Tubal-Cain had become so great an artificer in brass and silver, seems to belong to one of his descendants rather than Noah; and as Noah was not the first husbandman in the world, so neither can it be concluded, from his having planted a vineyard, that he was the first vine-dresser .- Stackhouse.

* Commentators in general understand by the term, 'sons of God,' the children of Seth, who are distinguished thereby from the daughters of men, the children of Cain, who were as remarkable for their wickedness as the other family had been for their piety and zeal for the worship of the true God. Upon the whole, the design of the historian is evidently to show, that the children of Seth contracted an alliance with the daughters of Cain, and joined in the universal corruption of mankind.

diction was indeed true; but not exact in | of Seth, to take wives as merely gratified point of circumstance; for Noah was in- their lascivious fancy; which shows that strumental in being the restorer of the though they were the offspring of the desolated world, delivering the church, righteous, they were greatly degenerated from their piety and strict obedience to the If we consider the prodigious length of divine laws; for it is very observable, that men's lives in this age, the strength of immediately after this alliance, the Almighty complains of the universal depravity of mankind, the children of the righteous having been infected by the practices of the wicked, and too far involved with them in a sinful gratification of their lusts and passions. Nay, so aggravated was their wickedness, so heinous their sin, that the Lord is said to have repented + " that he had made man upon the earth,' and to have determined to cut him off. the piety of righteous Noah obtained grace and favour in the eyes of his God, who was graciously pleased to reserve him and his family, consisting of eight persons,

standing tokens of his everlasting love to his church and people.

The Almighty Parent of the universe, who is merciful in all his ways, though men are corrupt and abominable, gave a signal proof of his forbearance, in allowing mankind an hundred and twenty years to repent; nay, to magnify the riches of his goodness, when that term was almost expired he gave them a second warning; being yet unwilling to destroy them.

But at length, when the Lord saw that mankind were so universally corrupted, that they despised his forbearance, and persisted in their wickedness, in spite of all that could be done to reclaim them; he made known to his servant Noah his awful determination, to involve them, and the earth they inhabited, in one general destruction, by a flood of water. According therefore to his gracious design towards Noah and his family, whom in his wise providence he had appointed to replenish the depopulated world, God warned him to make an ark, or large vessel, to contain his family and some of all creatures; for seven days hence, (says he) 'I will cause it to rain forty days and forty nights upon the earth;' in which time if they had repented, and turned unto the Lord their God, to his service and worship, there is good ground to believe their doom would have been reversed, even as Nineveh was saved by the turning of its inhabitants to the Lord, at the preaching of his servant Jonah.

In obedience to the divine command, Noah set about the arduous work, which he finished precisely according to God's direction, before the rain began to fall: having been greatly encouraged, by an assurance from his Maker, that though he destroyed all flesh, he would establish his covenant with him.

The form and dimensions of this ark are best described by the sacred historian; And this is the fashion in which thou shalt make it of; the length of the ark

as eternal monuments of his goodness, and | shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above, and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof, with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.'*

> The necessary preparations being thus made, God commanded Noah and his family to come into the ark, and to take in with him every living creature; but with distinction in respect to their quality. Of clean beasts, he was to take them in by

> * The ark, according to the sacred historian, was 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height; and if we suppose the cubit here mentioned at the lowest computation, to be but a foot and a half long, yet was the length of it, according to that proportion, 450 feet, the breadth 75, and the height 45; and consequently, the whole capacity 1,518,750 cubical feet, which was space enough, in all conscience, to receive every thing, and much more than every thing, that was to be contained in it. For it appears from the sacred text, that the form of the ark was rectangular; and being intended only for a kind of float, to swim above the water, the flatness of its bottom did render it much more capacious. It appears from the same text, that this ark consisted of three stories, and the whole height of it being 45 feet, it may well be supposed that this height was equally divided among the three stories, and so each story was 15 feet high, only deducting a foot and a half, or one cubit, for the slope of the roof, or the cover of the upper story. It is likewise pretty well agreed by interpreters, that the lowest story was appointed for four-footed animals, as most commodious for them; the middle story for their provender, and what they were to live upon; and the upper story partly for the birds and what they were to eat, and partly for Noah and his family, together with their utensils: and that each of these stories was spacious enough to receive what was to be put therein, will appear to any one who will give himself the trouble of making a geometrical calculation. Reckoning the cubit at eighteen inches, Dr Hales proves the ark to have been of the burthen of 42,413 tons. "A first-rate man of war is between 2,200 and 2,300 tons: and consequently, the ark had the capacity or stowage of eighteen of such ships, the largest in present use, and might carry 20,000 men, with provisions for six months, besides the weight of 1,800 cannons, and of all military stores. Can we doubt of its being sufficient to contain eight persons, and about two hundred or two hundred and fifty pair of four-footed animals; a number to which, according to M. Buffon, all the various distinct species may be reduced, together with all the subsistence necessary for a twelvemonth?" these are to be added all the fowls of the air, and such reptiles and insects as cannot live unde water .- Stackhouse and Horne,

sevens, the male and his female, that is, three pair of each, and the seventh for sacrifice; but of unclean only by two, the male and his female.

These creatures, as it were, by instinct came to Noah, who placed them according to their size and nature in the ark, having already provided for their subsistence. Having thus obeyed the divine direction, the pious patriarch entered the ark with his family in the six hundredth year of his age; and on the seventeenth day of the second month (about the beginning of May,) the face of things began to wear a gloomy aspect, and threaten some dreadful judgment. The windows or cataracts of heaven were opened, and the earth was overspread with dreadful inundation. In vain did sinful mortals seek for shelter, or endeavour by climbing to shelter themselves from the common ruin, for mountains and valleys were soon alike, and every refuge was banished their sight.* Forty days and nights did it rain without intermission, when the ark began to float, and was lifted up above the earth. A dismal scene now appeared; the earth with all its beautiful variety of nature and art was no more; nothing remained but a watery desert abounding with wrecks of men and things, all of which, the inhabitants of the ark excepted, were overwhelmed in the dreadful inundation. The Almighty having thus avenged himself of a sinful world, began now to entertain benevolent thoughts

towards his reserved inhabitants of the ark; and, mindful of the covenant he made with his servant Noah, caused a wind to blow, which drove back the waters, and left the earth dry.

The first token which Noah discovered of the cessation of the flood, was the resting of the ark upon the mountains of Ararat.† This was about the beginning of

^{*} In vain doth he fly whom God pursues. There is no way to fly from his judgments, but to fly to his mercy by repentance. The faith of the righteous cannot be so much derided as their success is magnified. How securely doth Noah ride out this uproar of heaven, earth, and waters! He hears the pouring down of the rain above his head; the shrieking of men, and roaring and bellowing of beasts on both sides of him; the raging and threats of the waves under him; he saw the miserable shifts of the distressed unbelievers; and, in the meantime, sits quietly in his dry cabin, neither feeling nor fearing evil. He knew that he which owned the waters would steer him; that he who shut him in would preserve him. How happy a thing is faith! what a quiet safety, what a heavenly peace doth it work in the soul, in the midst of all the inundation of evil!—Bishop Hall.

⁺ There are various opinions concerning the situation of mount Ararat; but the most general as well as agreeable to reason, is that it was near the middle of Armenia. This mountain has obtained more celebrity than any other on the surface of the globe, and is an object of the greatest veneration, not merely to the natives, but to Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans. Its very name is closely and indissolubly connected with the history of man, and forms a connecting link between two worlds, standing as an awful monument of the destruction of one and the existence of another. Every association connected with its name, as recorded in the sacred page, is calculated to produce strong, deep, and solemn impressions on the mind. Ararat is at present called by the Armenians, *Macis*, or the 'mother of the world,' and by the Turks Agri-Dagh, 'the great mountain;' and it well deserves that appellation, from its vast base and immense elevation. Ararat forms the angle of an immense chain of mountains, on the loftiest pinnacle of which, the natives of the country believe that a part of the ark yet remains. It is a most sublime and stupendous object, which excites in the mind of the beholder the mingled emotions of admiration and terror. One of the great features of this mountain is the immense chasm which extends nearly half way down, over which impends a cliff, discernible at a great distance, whose enormous masses of ice are from time to time precipitated into the abyss with a noise resembling the loudest thunder. "Nothing," says Mr Morier, "can be more beautiful than its shape; more awful than its height. Compared with it, all the other mountains sink into insignificance. It is perfect in all its parts; no hard rugged feature: no unnatural prominences: every thing is in harmony: and all combines to render it one of the most sublime objects in nature. Spreading originally from an immense base, its slope towards the summit is gradual, until it reaches the regions of the snows, when it becomes more abrupt. The cone is surmounted with a crown of ice which glitters in the sun with a peculiar and dazzling brightness. As a foil to this stupendous work, a smaller hill rises from the same base, near the original mass, similar to it in shape and proportion, and in any other situation entitled to rank among the high mountains. The mountain is divided into three regions of different breadths. The first, composed of a short and slippery grass, or sand as troublesome as the quicksands of Africa, is occupied by the shepherds: the second, by tigers and crows: the remainder which is half the

October, and about the middle of December following, the tops of the mountains appeared. The smallest appearance of any thing substantial was a pleasing prospect

mountain, is covered with snow which has been accumulating ever since the ark rested upon it; and these snows are concealed during one half of the year in very dense clouds." Sir Robert Ker Porter enjoyed a fine panoramic view of it from the southern slope of the Tchildir-Dagh, on his route from Teflis to Erivan, which we shall give in his own words: "A vast plain, covered with villages, the towers and spires of the churches of Etchmiadzine arising from amidst them, the glittering waters of the Araxes flowing, the fresh green of the vale, and the subordinate range of mountains skirting the base of the awful monument of the antediluvian world; it seemed to stand a stupendous link in the history of man, uniting the two races of men before and after the flood. From the spot on which I stood I beheld it in all its amplitude of grandeur; and it seemed as if the hugest mountains in the world had been piled on each other to form this one sublime immensity of ice, and earth, and rock, and snow. The icy peaks of its double heads rose majestically into the clear and cloudless heavens, the sun blazed bright on them, and the reflection sent forth a radiance equal to other suns. This point of the view united the utmost grandeur of plain and height. But the feelings I experienced whilst looking on the mountain are hardly describable. My eyes, unable to rest for any length of time upon the blinding glory of its summits, wandered down the apparently interminable sides till I could no longer trace their vast lines in the mists of the horizon; when an irrepressible impulse immediately carrying my eyes again upwards, refixed my gaze upon the awful glare of Ararat, and the bewildered sensibility of sight being answered by a similar feeling in the mind, for some moments I was lost in a strange suspension of the powers of thought." Its elevation, though vast, has never been ascertained by actual mensuration. The probability is, that its base is from 8000 to 9000 feet above the sea; and if this be added to its own elevation from the base, it will be little if at all inferior to that of Chimborazo in the Andes. Herodotus and Æschylus reckoned Caucasus, or the modern Elboors, as the greatest and highest mountain in the world; but their knowledge of the world was very limited; and we now know that it is inferior both to the Andes and the Himmaleh, and probably to Ararat itself. The greater elevation of this latter may be inferred from the fact, that it is more than half-way down from the summit covered with permanent snow; and from what is recorded in Scripture, that from the day on which the waters began to decrease, and the ark rested on its sublime summit, till the tops of the neighbouring mountains were seen, a space of not less than 73 days intervened. Its comparative elevation to the other Armenian mountains must have been very great when so long a space of time was required for the sinking of the waters to their level. From Erivan Script. Illust. &c.

to Noah, who had been confined a whole year-for so long the waters continued over the earth-and beheld nothing around him but water; but at the same time wisely thinking, that though the tops of the mountains were visible, the valleys were even then overflowed, he patiently waited forty days longer; when, opening the window of the ark, he let fly a raven, in order to learn whether the waters were dried. Encouraged by the absence of the raven seven days, he let fly a dove, which, finding no resting place, returned to its old habitation. Seven days afterwards, the patriarch sent out the same bird, which returned with an olive-branch,-a happy certainty that the waters were removed from the place where the olive-tree stood.

Still, determined not to be too hasty, he remained in the ark seven days more, and

Ararat looks so high and vast, that when the air is clear it does not seem above 2 leagues off, whereas it is 12. Its great elevation may also be inferred from its distant visibility. It is clearly seen from Maraut in Aberbeidjan, 132 British miles E. in a direct line; and Bruce says he saw it from Derbent, 240 British miles direct distance. Tournefort, the celebrated French botanist, attempted to scale its summit, but all in vain. After spending a whole summer's day, he got no farther than a frozen patch of snow. Morier imagined that it might be scaled on the side towards Baiazid, where the base is much higher than towards the Araxes, and the ascent apparently much easier. But this also proved abortive. Ibrahim, pasha of Baiazid, accompanied by a large party of horse-men, at the most favourable season of the year as-cended as high as he could on horseback on the Baiazid side. He caused three stations to be marked out on the ascent, where he built huts, and collected provisions. He had no great difficulty in crossing the snow, but when he came to the cap of ice that covers the summit, he could proceed no farther, because several of his men were then seized with violent oppressions of the chest, from the rarefaction of the air. He had before offered large rewards to any one who should reach the large rewards to any one who should reach the-top; and although many Koords who lived at its-base have attempted it, all have failed. Besides the great rarefaction of the air, the pasha had to contend with dangers from the falling ice, large pieces of which were constantly detaching them-selves from the main body and rolling downward. The adventurous traveller Parrot, was, however,. more successful than his predecessors. He ascended it in September, 1829, and planted the cross on its summit .- Bell's Geography, Paxton's

then sent out the dove a third time and as she did not return, he prepared for his exit out of the ark. Nevertheless, though he made the necessary preparations, mindful of God's direction, he ventured not forth till fifty-five days afterwards, in order that the earth might be dry for his reception.*

* The deluge is one of the most remarkable events recorded in the annals of the human race, and consequently one of the principal epochs in 2hronology. According to the most approved calculations, this event occurred in the year of the world 1656, and before the birth of Christ, two thousand three hundred and forty-eight years. From this flood, the state of the world is divided into diluvian and antediluvian. Of so general a calamity, from which only a single family of all who then lived on the face of the earth was preserved, we might naturally expect to find some memorials in the traditionary records of Pagan history, as well as in the sacred volume, where its peculiar cause, and the circumstances which attended it, are so distinctly and fully related. Its magnitude and singularity could scarcely fail to make an indelible impression on the minds of the survivors, which would be communicated from them to their children, and would not be easily effaced from the traditions even of their latest posterity. A deficiency in such traces of this awful event, though perhaps it might not serve entirely to invalidate our belief of its reality, would certainly tend considerably to weaken its claim to credibility; it beingscarcely probable that the knowledge of itshould be utterly lost to the rest of the world, and confined to the documents of the Jewish nation alone. What we might reasonably expect, has, accordingly, been realized. The evidence which has been brought, from almost every quarter of the world, to bear upon the reality of this event, is of the most conclusive and irresistible kind; and every investigation, whether etymological or historical which has been made concerning heathen rites and traditions, has constantly added to its force, no less than to its extent.

"Some are puzzled," says Bishop Watson, "to find water enough to form an universal deluge: to assist their endeayours it may be remarked, that was all the water precipitated, which is dissolved in the air, it might probably be sufficient to cover the surface of the whole earth to the depth of above thirty feet." Suppose the flood to have extended over the whole globe of the earth, say others, yet there might have been water enough to overwhelm it to the height mentioned in the scriptures. For let us consider the many causes that concurred to form the deluge: first the air was condensed into clouds, and those descended with continued force and violence, not breaking into drops, but in a body, which Sir Walter Raleigh compares to the water-spouts common in the West Indies, whence they are called the cataracts, or flood-gates of heaven, as when God withdraws the retentive power which was in the clouds, so that

Accordingly, he went out of the ark, on God's positive command, on the twenty-seventh day of the second month; so that, as before observed, there was an exact

the waters must necessarily fall in abundance, according to the expression of Joh, Behold, he withholdeth the waters and they dry up; again he sendeth them out and they overturn the earth, chap. xii. 15. Moreover, God who at first set bounds to the ocean, saying, 'thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' then gave it a commission to execute his justice upon a sinful world; for 'the fountains of the great deep were broken up,' Gen. vii. 11. that is, the vast body of waters which lie in the bowels of the earth rushed out upon it with impetuosity and violence, which must necessarily occasion such an inundation as that mentioned by Moses. Objections have been started from a consideration of the altitude of the mountains; but it is not difficult to show that these are by no means valid; for suppose the circumference of the earth to be 21,000 miles, the diameter of that circle will be 7,000; and from the superficies to the centre Take then the highest mountain in the world, Caucasus, Taurus, Teneriffe, or any other, and suppose the height, according to the highest calculation, to be thirty miles, it is manifest that all the waters mingled within the bowels of the earth, in a depth of 3,500 miles, would be sufficient to cover a space of thirty miles in height, no less than one hundred and sixteen times! It is, however, more than probable, that men have been ex ceedingly mistaken about the real height of moun tains, an error which they have fallen into from confounding the measure of their oblique elevation with their perpendicular altitude from the plain. Here then, to use the animated language of a late writer, we appeal once more to nature; and find that in fact there are at this day, as evident, as demonstrative, as incontestable proofs of the deluge and of its universality, at the distance of about four thousand years, as if it had but happened last year. For whereas Moses assures us that 'the waters prevailed fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains,' let the mountains themselves be appealed to for the truth of his assertion. Examine the highest eminences of the earth, and they all with one accord, produce the spoils of the ocean deposited upon them on that occasion: the shells and skeletons of sea-fish, and sea-monsters of all kinds. The Alps, the Apennines, the Pyrenees, Libanus, and Atlas, and Ararat, every mountain of every region under heaven, where search has been made, from Japan to Mexico, all conspire in one uniform, universal proof, that they all had the sea spread over their highest summits. Search the earth; you will find the mouse-deer, natives of America, buried in Ireland; elephants, natives of Asia and Africa, buried in the midst of England; crocodiles, natives of the Nile, in the heart of Germany; shell-fish, never known in any but the American seas, together with entire skeletons of whales, in the most inland regions of England · trees of vast dimensions, with their roots and tops, and some also with leaves and fruit, at the bottoms

solar year, from the time in which the rain began to descend to that in which Noah and his family came out of the ark, with all the living creatures he had taken into This was about the beginning of the month of May, when nature appears in her bloom and verdure, and there was abundance of pasture for the refreshment of the creatures, that had been so long confined in the ark, as well as afforded all that could contribute to the use and delight of the sons of men. Noah had no sooner set his foot on dry land, than he erected an altar unto the God of his salvation, as a token of his gratitude for the mighty deliverance he had wrought for him and his family, whom he had reserved for replenishing the depopulated world.

The incense offered by the pious patriarch came up to the Lord with a sweet smelling savour, from the purity of his intention; and God was pleased to signify his approbation, not only by establishing his former covenant with Noah (and in him with his posterity) but graciously assuring him, that he would no more curse the ground for man's sake, 'for the imagination of his heart was evil from his youth,' nor extirpate the whole race of creatures any more.

Having thus wonderfully restored the order of things to its former state; the blessing pronounced upon Noah and his posterity is renewed by the bequest of universal possession and dominion of the new earth; the flood was the forfeiture and penalty for non-allegiance; whereas by this renewal of lease or tenure, the curse on man's old territory was fully accomplished, and man made a free tenant again, the Almighty reserving to himself the conditional clause of service and obedience, from the date of the flood.

Accordingly, God pronounced his bless ing upon Noah and his children, commanded them to multiply, and fill the earth; and whereas they had formerly taken no other food than vegetables, they were now, after the flood, permitted to eat flesh, but particularly enjoined to abstain from the blood, and flesh strangled, from which the blood had not been drawn; lest the human race, like the bestial, should eat creatures alive; that is, the blood as well as the flesh.* But though the supreme Governor of the universe permitted them to kill animals for their food and sustenance, he most solemnly forbade them to shed the blood of man; declaring that shedding human blood should be retaliated by the same: 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' God then proceeded to ratify the covenant he had made with Noah not to destroy the world and its inhabitants any more by water; and to give him assurance of the promise, placed the rainbow as a token in the clouds, + 'I set my bow in the cloud,' a

of mines and marls; and that too, in regions where no tree of that kind was ever known to grow; nay, where it is demonstrably impossible they could grow, and what is still more, trees and plants of various kinds which are not known to grow in any region under heaven.—Jones' Biblical Cyclop.

^{*} The words in the text are, 'But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat.' This the Hebrew doctors generally understand to be a prohibition to cut off any limb of a living creature, and to eat it while the life, that is, the blood, was in it: 'whilst yet it lives and palpitates or trembles,' as a modern interpreter has truly explained their sense. And in this they are followed by several Christians, who think, as Maimonides did, that there were some people in the old world so savage and barbarous, that they did eat raw flesh while it was yet warm from the beast, out of whose body it was cut piece-meal. Such a revolting custom still obtains in Abyssinia in the present day,—the principal dish of the Abyssinians being beef-steaks not warm from the fire, but cut warm from the haunch of the living animal, and devoured, while they are yet vibrating with life, with a sufficient quantity of hydromel, or bouza.

[†] It has been objected to this passage, that, according to the laws of reflection and refraction, established in the system of nature, the phenomena of the rainbow must have been produced, as it is now, in certain circumstances, from the beginning of the world; and therefore could not have been first set in the cloud, as a token of God's covenant with man, after the flood. But do the words necessarily imply that the rainbow had never appeared before? Rather, perhaps, the contrary. The following paraphrase of the passage is submitted by Bishop Horne as a just and natural one;—

bow unstringed, a bow hanging in the Noah having received the establishment that he would not suddenly shoot forth the arrows of implacable wrath, though provoked in the highest degree. Though the old world was destroyed for the wickedness of its inhabitants, and the new world might be expected to have been filled with people of a better disposition; as in the ark there were unclean as well as clean beasts; so in the family of righteous Noah, there was a wicked Ham, as well as a pious Shem and Japheth.

Accordingly, there was one of the three sons of Noah, who were preserved in the ark to people the uninhabited world, that by his wickedness not only brought upon himself the curse of his father, but the vengeance of the Almighty; and instead of propagating a race of pious children, was father of an untoward generation, that felt the severest strokes of divine wrath.

This arose from the first palpable token of human degeneracy after the deluge.

"When, in the common course of things, I bring a cloud over the earth, under certain circumstances, I do set my bow in it. That bow shall be from henceforth a token of the covenant I now make with you to drown the earth no more by a flood. Look upon it, and remember this covenant. As certainly as the bow is formed, by the operation of physical causes, in the cloud, and as long as it continues to be thus formed, so certainly and so long shall my covenant endure, standing fast for Jacob, we are told (Gen. xxxi. 45, 52.), "took a stone, and set it up for a pillar, and said, This pillar be witness." God, in like manner, (if we may so express it,) 'took the rainbow, and said, This bow be witness." Neither the stone nor the rainbow be witness. bow were new created for the purpose. When the Jews behold the rainbow, they bless God, who remembers his covenant, and is faithful to his promise. And the tradition of this its designation to proclaim comfort to mankind, was strong among the heathen; for, according to the mythology of the Greeks, the rainbow was the daughter of Wonder, "a sign to mortal men," and regarded, upon its appearance, as the messenger of the celestial deities. Can we any where find a more striking instance of the sublime than in the following short description of it? "Look upon the rainbow, and praise Him who made it: very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof;—it encompasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle; and the hands of the most High have bended it!"—Carpenter.

cloud, an emblem of the divine favour, of God's covenant, and a command to multiply and replenish the earth, assiduously applied himself to agriculture, and in the course of his labours planted a vineyard. Naturally desirous of tasting the fruit of his labour, and unapprized of the intoxicating quality of the juice, he drank too freely, through the heat of the weather, and being overcome thereby lay down to sleep in his tent, where, by the ruffling of the wind or the discomposure of his body, he was uncovered in that part which nature teaches us to conceal.

> In this posture he was first discovered by Ham, who, instead of covering his father's nakedness and concealing his shame, exposed his weakness and ridiculed his situation. But his brothers, endued with filial piety, and moved at the profligate behaviour of Ham, and the indecent posture of their aged parent, went and fetched a garment, and looking the contrary way, to avoid the disgusting sight, covered his nakedness. When Noah recovered from the stupefaction into which the wine had thrown him, and was informed of his younger son's flagrant neglect of duty; he uttered a curse implying that Ham's violation of filial duty would be retaliated upon him, in the wretchedness and degeneracy of his children, particularly the race of Cain: 'cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.'*

^{*} The curse of servitude pronounced upon Canaan must be understood as extending to his whole Not only were the devoted nations which God destroyed before Israel descended from Canaan, but so also were the Phenicians and Carthaginians, who were at length subjugated with dread-ful destruction by the Greeks and Romans. "The whole continent of Africa," says Bishop Newton, "was peopled principally by the descendants of Ham: and for how many ages have the better parts of that country lain under the dominion of the Romans, and then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks! In what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, misery, live most of the inhabit-ants, and of the poor negroes, how many hun-dreds every year are sold and bought, like beasts in the market; and conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another"

pious behaviour of his sons Shem and Japheth: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem: God shall enlarge Japheth,* and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.'

Good old Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, and paid the debt of nature at the age of nine hundred and fifty. The sacred historian mentions no other children of Noah than these three, from each of whom descended a numerous race, which in process of time peopled the whole earth.

CHAPTER III.

The building of Babel, and confusion of tongues. -Birth and calling of Abram .- First battle. -Abram rescues Lot .- Circumcision instituted .- God's promise is renewed to Abram, who is now called Abraham.

THERE was as yet but one language used and known throughout the world; but the sons of men greatly multiplying, they extended their habitations far and wide. Their chief place of residence is supposed to have been at the foot of the mountains of Armenia, but they now spread themselves as far as Syria, and bending their course westward, some of them took their residence in the land of Shinar, situated on the banks of the Tigris, and comprehending the country of Eden, which was afterwards called Chal-

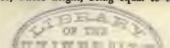
A striking instance of the early power of ambition over the minds of mortals now presents itself to our view; for those new inhabitants had not long taken possession of their respective places of abode,

God has not, however, commanded us to enslave the negroes as he did Israel to exterminate the Canaanites, and he may one day bare his arm to avenge the cruel injustice.

equal warmth did he applaud and bless the | before they determined to render their name famous among future generations, by some monument that might command their admiration. To effect this, they agreed to build a strong city, and a tower of such monstrous height, that its summit should reach up to heaven.+ From its in-

> † The design of the tower with which the founders of Babylon proposed to adorn their infant city, was not, as some writers have strangely imagined, to open a way for themselves into the mansions of eternal felicity; for it can scarcely be supposed, that so extravagant an idea could enter their minds, depraved and presumptuous as they were, much less that it could ripen into a regular plan of operation. The words in which they couched their daring resolution, 'Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven,' mean no more than a tower of extraordinary height. Such phrases may be found in every language; and their meaning can scarcely be misunderstood. The opinion of Josephus is not much more reasonable; that their design was to raise a tower higher far than the summits of the highest mountains, to defend them from the waters of a second flood, of which they were Had this been their design, they would not have commenced their operations on the level plain, but on the top of Ararat where the ark rest-They had the solemn promise of Jehovah, that he would no more destroy the earth by water; and beheld the ratification of it in the radiant bow of heaven, placed in the cloud to quiet the fears of guilty mortals. If the Noachidæ had distrusted the promise and sign of heaven, they had not descended from the mountains, where only they could hope for safety from the strength and height of their tower, into the plains of Babylonia, and fixed their abode between two mighty rivers, to whose frequent inundations that province is exposed. Nor could they be so infat-uated as to imagine, that a tower constructed of bricks, whether hardened in the sun, or burnt in the fire, could resist the waters of a general delmge, whose impetuous assault, as they must have well known, the strong barriers of nature could hardly endure. Equally inadmissible is the notion, that they constructed this tower to defend them from the general conflagration, of which they are supposed to have received some obscure and imperfect notices; for in the destruction of the world, who could hope to find safety in the recesses of a tower, or on the summit of the mountains? they would rather seek for refuge from the devouring element, in the profound caverns of the earth.—Paxton's Script. Illust.
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> It is the opinion of the learned Bochart, that,

whatever we read of the tower inclosed in the temple of Belus, may very properly be applied to the tower of Babel; because, upon due search and examination, he conceives them to be one and the same structure. Now of this tower Herodotus tells us, that it was a square of a furlong on each side, that is, half a mile in the whole circumference, whose height, being equal to its



^{*} This blessing had its effect; for the true worship of God continued in the race of Shem, and Japheth became very rich and powerful,—an in-stance of the duty children owe their parents, and that they should cover their faults, and not expose

tended height, many have been led to think, that their design of erecting it arose not only from ambition, but also from fear lest they might be overwhelmed by a second deluge. Whatever was the motive, we are assured by the sacred historian, that they set about the wild project, undismayed by the difficulty of the work, and began to make the materials, such as brick, and a cement of slimy clay instead of mortar. They went on some time with the work; but the omniscient Jehovah observed their doings,

basis, was divided into eight towers built one upon another; but what made it look as divided into eight towers, was very probably the manner of its ascent. The passage to go up it, continues our author, was a circular, or winding way, carried round the outside of the building to its highest point: from whence it seems most likely, that the whole ascent was, by the benching-in, drawn in a sloping line, from the bottom to the top, eight times round it, which would make the appearance of eight towers one above another. This way was so exceeding broad, that it afforded space for horses and carts, and other means of carriage to meet and turn, and the towers, which looked like so many stories upon one another, were each of them seventy-five feet high, in which were many stately rooms, with arched roofs supported by pillars, which were made parts of the temple, after the tower became consecrated to that idolatrous use; and, on the uppermost of the towers, which was held more sacred, and where their most solemn devotions were performed, there was an observatory, by the benefit of which it was, that the Babylonians advanced their skill in astronomy beyond all other nations.

Some authors, following a mistake in the Latin version of Herodotus, wherein the lowest of these towers is said to be a furlong thick, and a furlong high, will have each of the other towers to be of a proportionate height, which amounts to a mile in the whole: but the Greek of Herodotus (which is the genuine text of that author) says no such thing, but only, that it was a furlong long, and a furlong broad, without mentioning any thing of its height; and Strabo, in his description of it (calling it a pyramid, because of its decreasing, or benching-in at every tower) says of the whole, that it was a furlong high, and a furlong on every side: for to reckon every tower a furlong high, would make the thing incredible, even though the authority of both these historians were for, as they are against it. Taking it only as it is described by Strabo, it was prodigious enough; since, according to his dimensions only, without adding any farther, it was one of the most wonderful works in the world, and much exceeded house.

knew the pride and wickedness of their hearts, and determined to stop them in their sinful career, in order to show them, that weak mortals can never escape the power and justice of the Almighty.

When the Creator beheld the pride and vanity of these his creatures, he thus expostulates with himself, 'Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.* Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' The Almighty having thus resolved by the exertion of a miraculous power to frustrate the towering hopes of these aspiring mortals, so confounded their tongues, that a universal jargon ensued, and the different dialects caused such a distraction of thought, that, incapable of understanding or making known to each other their respective ideas, nothing prevailed but confusion and disorder, and they were thus forced to desist from their undertaking. By this awful stroke of Divine justice, they were not only deprived of the power to proceed on their intended plan, but of one of the greatest pleasures of a social being, mutual converse, and agreeable intercourse. We are not to suppose that each individual had a peculiar dialect or language, but only the several tribes or families, (computed to be seventy,) who therefore dispersed, those of one language going one way, and those of another language bending their course another way. Two wise ends were answered by Divine Providence, in thus scattering abroad a united people; the first was the prevention of a wicked design, and the second, a more speedy and general increase of the inhabitants of the earth.

^{*} The meaning of this expression is, according to the best commentators, 'And now nothing will hinder them from executing their project, unless i interpose;' or rather, they imagine to do as they will.

The building which they began to erect was called Babel, or confusion, from the judgment that attended their rash and impious undertaking.

The family of the three sons of Noah being thus scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, they settled in different parts of the world; some in Asia, some in Africa, and some in Europe, particularly those of the family of Japheth.*

The confusion of tongues and dispersion of the family of Noah happened just an hundred and one years after the flood, as is evident from the birth of Peleg, the son of Eber, who was great-grandson to Shem, and born in the hundredth and first year after that memorable period.

The wise Disposer of all events having thus severely chastised the folly and presumption of mankind, and scattered them abroad over the face of the earth, that, disunited, they might not again attempt such complicated wickedness, as that of contending with his power, and questioning his truth, now reveals a dawn of his glorious design of choosing to himself a peculiar people, who should constitute the church of God, the company of the faithful in all ages, that should endure for ever.

This was the birth of Abram, on which account the inspired penman gives a very precise account of the genealogy of Terah, one of the descendants of Shem, because Terah was the father of Abram, afterwards called Abraham, who was honoured by

tries of the Greeks, Sclavonians, Bulgarians, Turks, and Armeniaus."—Dr. Hales.

God with being father of the faithful, or worshippers of the true God; though Terah his father was an idolater, according to the testimony of Joshua, chap. xxiv. 2.

Now Terah had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram, who was the youngest; Haran the eldest died before his father,† leaving behind him one son, named Lot, and two daughters, Milcah and Iscah, the latter of whom was married to Abram, and called by the Jews Sarai for her beauty and domestic economy. Soon after, his father Terah took Abram, his grandson Lot, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, from Ur, a city of the Chaldeans, to journey toward the land of Canaan,‡ and taking up their abode at Haran, Terah died there by the way in the two hundred and fifth year of his age.

It is evident from the account of the inspired penman, that the Almighty had revealed himself to Abram before his father's death; for, according to Gen. xxii.

1. 'The Lord had said unto Abram,' &c.

^{*} The following curious and valuable commentary on the 10th chap. of Genesis, which records the primitive settlements of the three families, is furnished by Abulfaragi, in the History of the Dynasties: "In the 140th year of Peleg, the earth was divided, by a second division, among the sons of Noah. To the sons of Shem was allotted the middle of the earth; namely, Palestine, Syria, Assyria, Samarra, (a town of Babylonia, or Chaldean Irac,) Babel, Persia, and Hegiaz, (or Arabia Petræa.) To the sons of Ham, Teman, (or Idumea,) Africa, Nigritia, Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, Scindia, and India, (or Western and Eastern India,) on both sides of the Indus. To the sons of Japheth also, Garbea, (the North,) Spain, France, the company of the Challege of the Salara in the same of the same of

[†] It is observable that this Haran was the first son that died in a natural way before his father; before this instance those who were born first, died first.

[‡] The land of Canaan lies between the Mediterranean sea and the mountains of Arabia, and extends from Egypt to Phœnicia. It is bounded to the east by the mountains of Arabia; to the south, by the wilderness of Paran, Idumea, and Egypt; to the west by the Mediterranean, called, in Hebrew, the Great sea; and to the north, by the mountains of Libanus. Its length from the city of Dan, since called Cæsarea Philippi, or Paneadis, which stands at the foot of these mountains, to Beersheba, is about seventy leagues, and its breadth, from the Mediterranean sea to the eastern borders, is in some places thirty. It was first called the land of Canaan, from Cainan the son of Ham, whose posterity possessed it. It was afterwards called Palestine, from the people which the Hebrews call Philistines, and the Greeks and Romans corruptly Palestines, who inhabited the seacoasts, and were first known to them. It likewise had the name of the land of Promise, from the promise God made Abraham of giving it to him; that of the land of Israel, from the Israelites having made themselves masters of it; that of Judah, from the tribe of Judah, which was the most considerable of the twelve: and lastly, the happiness it had of being sanctified by the presence, actions, miracles, and death of Jesus Christ, has given it the name of the Holy Land, which it retains to this day .- Lamy's Introduction.

country in which he then resided, and travel to a country he would show.* He promised to make him father of a mighty people, and in him to bless all the nations of the earth.

Abram steadfastly believing the divine promise, though he knew not the difficulties that might attend his removal, nor even the country in which he was to settle, immediately on the decease of his father Terah prepared for his journey, taking with him his nephew Lot, his wife Sarai, and the rest of his family, in order to go to the land which God might appoint; and by his strict attention to the divine command, prove at once his faith and obedience.

Accordingly he pursued his journey, till he arrived at the land of Canaan (the place appointed by the divine decree); and that part of it which is called the Oak + of Moreh.

On his arrival at this place, the Lord appeared to Abram again, repeating the promise he had before made to him, viz. that his posterity should inherit the land, rian writes, that 'the Canaanite was then in the land.'

all his mercies. From thence he removed to a mountain on the east of Bethel, and

He had commanded him to leave the pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai, I where he likewise erected an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of his God.

He was soon compelled to remove from Canaan, a famine happening in that country staking with him therefore his family, he set out on a journey to Egypt, determining to remain there till God in the course of his providence should call him thence. It appears from the following history, that Abram had observed, on his entry into these parts, the difference of their women, in point of shape and complexion, from those of his own country, and especially his wife Sarai, who was remarkably beautiful: fearing therefore she might attract the desire of some of the great men amongst them, and thereby endanger his safety, (his fear suggesting to his imagination, that if they found Sarai was his wife they would despatch him, in order to pave the way for the enjoyment of her,) to prevent so dreadful a catastrophe he made his wife acquainted with his jealous fear, and desired her to pass for his sister, in order to avoid the danger, though he had no issue as yet, and it was and for her sake be more generally repossessed by others; for the sacred histo-spected in a strange country. Nor was Abram's fear without foundation; for they no sooner entered the land of Egypt than The heart of pious Abram was affected the inhabitants were captivated with the with the goodness and loving-kindness of charms of his wife, who in a short time the Lord, and in the fulness of his soul became so celebrated amongst them, that he there erected an altar to the God of her fame reached the ears of the king, by whom she was sent for to court, and treated with the highest honours; and Abram, for calling her sister, met with the kindest reception.

The interposition of divine Providence, to preserve inviolate the honour of the patriarch and the chastity of his wife, is very remarkable; for, to keep in due bounds the desires of Pharaoh § and his

^{*} It is very probable, that this was done by some appearance or other of the Shekinah, going before him, even as afterwards his posterity was conducted in the way thither; since, passing over rivers, climbing mountains, and travelling through a dangerous and vast desert, he had certainly need of an extraordinary divine direction, and of some sensible exhibition or token of it, while he had nothing but the promise of God to support him, in so long and so hazardous a journey .- Bibliotheca Bib.

[†] This in our translation is rendered *Plain*, but the Septuagint and most other versions has it Oak. We shall enter more largely on the subject when we come to treat of the Oak of Mamre.

[‡] The place here meant is mount Ephraim, which lay between Bethel, a town situated about eight miles from Jerusalem northwards, and Hai, which is situated towards the west of Bethel.

[§] Pharaoh was the common name of the Egyp-

courtiers, God brought upon them divers | might end in a rupture between tnemdiseases and bodily infirmities; and by that means caused them to suspect her to be a married woman.*

The king, strongly impressed by so remarkable a circumstance, sent for Abram, and upbraided him with spreading a false report, which might have occasioned him to have attempted the violation of his wife's chastity; and in an angry tone commanded him speedily to depart with her on pain of incurring his farther displeasure. However, he permitted him to remove without sustaining the least loss or detriment in his substance, which was very considerable, having received from the king most valuable presents, both in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

Lot also had now acquired considerable property; but as his uncle Abram was under a necessity of departing from Egypt, he accompanied him, not choosing to remain in a strange country without so valuable a friend and companion.

On their departure from Egypt, they made towards Bethel, where Abram had before erected an altar to the Lord, and now paid his vows to the most High again.

The families and possessions both of Abram and Lot being greatly multiplied, they frequently were in want of sufficiency of provision for their cattle in particular, which want most probably arose from the late famine that happened there, and the great number of Canaanitish inhabitants, who possessed the more fertile parts of the land. This want of pasture-ground produced much dispute between the herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot, insomuch that Abram, fearing that the contention which prevailed between their servants

selves, reasoned with his kinsman Lot on the subject, mildly addressing him in these terms: 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren.'+

To prevent any disagreeable consequence that might arise from their continuance together on the same spot, Abram wisely proposed a separation, as he was convinced there was not sufficient accommodation for them both, their substance being so prodigiously increased.

Such was the prudence and condescension of Abram, that though superior in every respect to Lot, he humbly offers him his choice of settlement in any part that should appear most eligible to him, and he himself would take the refuse; 'if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.'

Lot soon acceded to so advantageous a proposal; and having first taken a view of the country, and beheld that the plain of Jordan was very fruitful, and well-watered, he made choice of that as his spot of residence. ±

Having separated themselves by mutual consent, Lot directed his course towards

tian kings, and was a title of dignity, like that of Cæsar assumed by the Roman emperors.

+ So the ancients reputed, and called those that sprang from one common root, though not in a direct line, begotten by one and the same father. In this respect these were brethren in a natural relation; as with respect to religion, and the worship of the true God, they were brethren likewise

^{*} When a woman was brought into the seraglio or harem of the eastern princes, she underwent for a considerable time certain purifications before she was brought into the king's presence. It was in this interim that God plagued Pharaoh and his house with plagues, so that Sarai was restored before she could have been taken to the bed of the Egyptian king .- Dr Adam Clarke.

in a spiritual relation.

1 This was a fruitful and pleasant country, well watered by the streams of Jordan; which in many windings and turnings ran through it, and at some times overflowed it, and so rendered it very rich. Therefore Moses compares this plain to the garden of Eden, as most understand the words, 'the garden of the Lord,' which was well-watered by a river running through it; and to the land of Egypt, which is enriched by the overflowing of the Nile, as this was by the overflowing of Jordan, The description that is given us of some well-watered places in the east of late times, may serve to enliven our apprehensions of the fruitfulness and the beauty of the plain, where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, before God destroyed those cities.—Bishop Patrick, Harmer.

the east, and fixed his abode in the plain of Jordan, pitching his tent towards Sodom, the inhabitants of which were in those days notorious for the most abominable of crimes.

Lot had no sooner departed than the Almighty, ever mindful of his faithful servant Abram, again called him, renewing the promise he had made to him before. There is a peculiar beauty and simplicity in the style and manner in which the sacred historian records this gift of God to our father Abram. 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.'

The patriarch then removed his tent, and fixed his habitation near the oak * of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and according to his usual custom, whenever he pitched his tent upon a new spot, erected an altar for the worship of his God.

Soon after the removal of Abram to the oak of Mamre, happened the first pitched battle recorded in sacred history. Four kings were engaged against five, on the following occasion. Chedorlaomer, † king of Elam, held five petty kings in tributary subjection to him. These in process of time, desirous of throwing off the yoke, determined to unite their forces against him.

[Book I.

Chedorlaomer, hearing of this combination, in conjunction with three other kings, proclaimed war against them, in order to reduce them to their former subjection. A pitched battle ensued, and the tributary kings being defeated, each of them betook himself to flight. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah in their flight, are said to have fallen in the vale of Siddim, which was full of pits, containing great quantities of slimy dirt or clay. Whether they were pursued to those pits, and there slain by their victorious enemies; or whether they betook themselves there for the sake of shelter, is not expressed by the sacred penman; but we are informed that the conquerors plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, made Lot, Abram's kinsman, prisoner among the rest, and seized on all his possessions.

One of the inhabitants that escaped, informed Abram of the defeat, and of the hapless fate of his kinsman Lot: the patriarch then dwelt at the oak of Mamre, with Eshcol and Aner, who were brothers, and associates with him. The faithful Abram no sooner heard of what had befallen his kinsman, than he levied his ut-

names of the kings that were confederate with him; and the reason thereof is, that Ctesias (from whom the profane historians took the names of these kings) did not use their original Assyrian names in his history, but rather such as he found in the Persian records. However, since the date of this transaction falls four years before the death of Ninyas, there are good grounds to infer, that Ninyas, who then lived in Persia, was the Chedor-laomer of Moses, at that time the head of the Assyrian monarchy; that Amraphel was his deputy at Babylon in Shinar; and Arioch and Tidal his deputies over some other adjacent countries; for it is remarkable; that Ninyas was the first who appointed under him such deputies; nor is there any absurdity in Moses to call them kings, since it is observable, from what Isaiah hinted afterwards, (Ch. x. 8.) that the Assyrian boasted his deputy-princes to be equal to royal governors; "Are not my princes altogether kings?"—Shuckford's Connection, vol. ii.

^{*} This in most versions, as well as that of the plain of Moreh, is rendered oak. An ancient writer observes that this oak was famous in the time of Constantine, for pilgrimages, and for the anniversary feast which was solemnized there: that it was distant from Hebron but six miles, where there were still to be seen some cottages which Abram had built near to that oak, and a well which he had digged, and whither the Jews, Pagans, and Christians, travelled every year, either out of devotion, or a design to trade. Another author assures us, that he had seen this oak, and had carried home some of the fruit and wood of it; and farther observes, that its leaves are somewhat larger than those of the mastick tree, but its fruit resembles an acorn.

⁺ We meet no where in profane history with the name of Chedorlaomer, nor with any of those

most force to his rescue, armed all his own servants who were fit to bear arms, to the amount of three hundred and eighteen, and, accompanied by his associates Eshcol and Aner, pursued the spoilers as far as Dan.

Availing himself of the covert of the night, he put his forces into proper disposition, and attacked them on all quarters with the utmost vehemence. So sudden and vigorous an attempt on an army fatigued with a late engagement, and revelling in the spoils of conquest, had the desired effect, for Abram obtained a complete victory. Chedorlaomer, who exacted the tribute from the inhabitants of Sodom among the rest, was slain, and his whole army routed, and pursued by Abram's victorious party as far as Hobah, which is to the left of Damascus. Thus did Abram rescue the person and property of his nephew Lot, together with his whole household.

Having thus signalized both his valour and fidelity, he was highly caressed by those whose cause he had so gallantly espoused. Among the first was the king of Sodom, who, in token of the grateful sense he retained of the patriarch's important services, offered him as the reward of his valour the goods he had rescued, desiring him only to restore the prisoners. But Abram's righteous soul disdained to take advantage of the unfortunate; for, reserving to his associates that part of the plunder to which their services, according to the rules of war, entitled them, he restored to the king both his subjects and property; evincing throughout the whole of the proceeding the most disinterested fidelity, intrepid courage, and inflexible justice. The next by whom Abram was honoured for his laudable conduct, was Melchizedec,* king of Salem, who met him on his

return from the victory, presented him with bread and wine for his refreshment, and blessed Abram, and the God of Abram, through whose omnipotent arm he had gained so important a victory.

As a return for this grateful behaviour, the victorious patriarch presented Melchizedec with a tenth part of the spoils he had taken in the expedition.

As Abram had now acted in the public capacity of a warrior, and might reasonably expect that the kings whom he had lately routed would recruit their scattered forces, and prepare for a second attack, the Almighty, to fortify his mind against all fear from the most potent princes of the earth, informs him in a vision, that he had undertaken his defence, and would ever reward his faithfulness: Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great-reward.' It appears from the result, that notwithstanding God had promised to Abram that his seed should inherit the land, his present want of issue gave him some concern: he therefore takes this opportunity of distantly hinting the promise; and reminding his Maker that he had not hitherto been pleased to bestow an heir upon him; but that his servant was like to inherit his estate. The Lord, to clear up his doubts, and solve the perplexities which troubled his mind, tells him, that not his servant, but one that should proceed from his own bowels, should be his heir, and that he should not only have heirs from his own body, but a numerous progeny, equalling in number the stars of heaven. But such was the anxiety of the patriarch, that he desired some striking mark of the divine promise; 'Take,' therefore, said the Lord, 'an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three

^{*} There have been, and still are, various opinions, concerning the person and character of this Melchizedec. Several of the fathers took him for the Son of God, who appeared to Abram in the form of a man; but how could the Son of God

be a type of himself, as the apostle plainly tells us Melchizedec was a type of Christ? Heb. vii. 3. The most rational opinion is, that he was one of the princes of Canaan, who on account of his piety and goodness was called Melchizedec, that is, king of righteousness, which the Arabic version translates as his character, not his name.

years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.'

Abram obeyed the command of the Lord, and dividing the beasts, but not the birds, laid each piece upon the other, and when the fowls came upon the carcases, he drove them away. About the time of sun-set, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and he was seized with surprise on account of this prediction from the Almighty: 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.* And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace;+ thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

To give him assurance of the exact accomplishment of this promise, God caused a smoking furnace and a burning lamp to appear, which passed between the divided pieces of flesh.‡ Thus was the Almighty pleased to ratify his covenant with his chosen people; and having instructed Abram their father in the various fortunes of his descendants, particularly marks out the bounds of the promised land, and reckons up the several nations that inhabited it. 'Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt,' &c. Gen. xv. 18, 19, &c.

Sarai being now stricken in years, and having waited the fulfilment of the divine promise about the space of ten years, insomuch that she began to despair from the course of nature of raising up seed to her husband, importuned him to take her handmaid Hagar to be his concubinary wife, hoping that she might conceive by him, and it would be a means of perpetuating their family, and promoting the accomplishment of the divine promise.

Abram, at the solicitation of Sarai, took

place where those of the same family, or same nation at least, are supposed to live together, and in communion: which notion certainly arises from that natural desire which all men, who think their better part immortal, have to see and converse with such of their relations or countrymen as have left behind them a great and lasting fame. For, if the soul of Socrates, says one, were permitted to go where it desired, it would certainly associate with the worthies of Greece,—with Orphens, Museus, Homer, and those ancient demi-gods, who, in several generations, were so renowned.—Le Clerc.

^{*} Expositors have been very much divided in their opinions, how to make it out, that Abraham's posterity was in a state of servitude and affliction for the space of four hundred years. It may be observed, however, that all this difficulty is removed, if we suppose, that their state of affliction is to be reckoned from the time of Isaac's birth, which, to the deliverance out of the Egyptian bondage, was just four hundred and five years; but the five odd years are therefore not mentioned, because it is a common custom among all writers to take no notice of broken numbers, as they call them, when they name a round sum. And, if there be supposed they name a forther difficulty, in that their sojourning is (in Exod. xii. 40.) said to have continued 'four hundred and thirty years;' in these years, the time of Abraham's sojourning (which was exactly twenty-five years from his coming into the land of Canaan to the birth of Isaac) may be comprehended, and then all the difficulty vanishes; because these twenty-five years, added to the four hundred and five before mentioned, exactly make up the four

hundred and thirty.—Bp. Patrick.

† The expression in the text is, 'Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace,' which some will have to be no more than an oriental phrase for going to the grave; but since it cannot be said of Abraham, that he did, in this sense, 'go to his fathers,' (forasmuch as his body was so far from being laid with them in the sepulchre, that it was deposited in a country that had no manner of communication with that of his fathers,' it must be allowed, that, from this text, an argument may justly be drawn for the separate existence of human souls. The expression, however, of 'going to our fathers,' seems to have been formed from some such notion as this,—that the souls of the deceased do go to a certain

[‡] Several of the ancient fathers assert, that the manner of making alliance at this time, was to divide the victims into two parts, and lay them on two altars opposite each other, after which, the contracting parties walked between, signifying that the party which violated the covenant should be cut asunder like unto a victim. To this therefore we may suppose the circumstance before us to allude; the Almighty choosing to illustrate his mind and will by a plain reference to a prevailing custom at that time.

In concubinage, those secondary or subordinate wives were deemed lawful, and their off-spring legitimate; but in all other respects they were inferior to the first and principal. So that as they had no share in domestic affairs before they were concubines, neither had they afterwards, but were in every respect subject to their mistresses.

that she had conceived, she began to behave insolently towards her mistress,* who was much affected with the scorn and ingratitude of an Egyptian, to whose advancement she had solely contributed; and therefore warmly expostulates with her husband on the unworthy treatment she had met with from her handmaid, intimating, that his fondness of her might not a little encourage her in the same. But the honest patriarch, just in all his dealings, and true to every alliance, would by no means countenance the least mark of disrespect in Hagar towards her mistress, and to avoid every suspicion, wholly resigns her to her disposal: 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.'

We find from the result, that Sarai resented the injury she had sustained; for

* As an excuse, in some measure, for Abram, it may be pleaded, that having lived many years without giving occasion to suspect his modesty and continence, he did not in all probability now act from a criminal motive, but from a principle of conjugal affection to Sarai, in compliance with whose solicitations, made from her desire of thus contributing to the accomplishment of God's promises, he took Hagar to his bed: that having no longer any hope of issue by Sarai, he had recourse to this, as the only way he could devise, whereby to have God's promise of 'an heir that should be born of himself,' accomplished; and that polygamy, though certainly declared criminal by our Saviour, who has restored matrimony to its primitive institution, may have been at that time, if not allowed, yet tolerated by God, for the hardness of men's hearts.—Stackhouse.

The instances of polygamy which scripture records by no means exhibit inducements to the practice: witness Sarai and Hagar, Leah and Rachel, Hannah and Peniunah. As in ancient times family feuds imbittered polygamy, we shall find on inquiry, that in modern times also this irregular practice is far from adding any thing to domestic happiness. In Mahometan countries, where polygamy is allowed, what we are able to learn of the domestic life of the husbands, who have several wives, is calculated neither to make their lot enviable nor to give a favourable opinion of Mahomet's legislation: their house is a perpetual scene of tumult and contention. Nothing is to be heard but quarrels among the different wives, and complaints made to the husband. The four legal married wives complain that their slaves are preferred to them; and their slaves, that they are abandoned to the jealousy of their mistresses.—

Fragments to Calmet, Volney's Travels.

Hagar to his bed, and when she found that she had conceived, she began to behave insolently towards her mistress,* who was much affected with the scorn and ingratitude of an Egyptian, to whose ad-

In her journey through the deserts, she stopped at a fountain of water, in order to partake of its cooling refreshment, and rest her limbs wearied with travelling. Here she was accosted by a heavenly messenger, who, to impress her mind with a due sense of her former station and duty, emphatically calls her Sarai's maid, intimating thereby, that though she was admitted to her master's bed, she was as indispensably subject to the will of her mistress as ever, and therefore highly culpable in neglecting the obedience she still owed her.

When the angel inquired of her the cause of her departure, and the place of her destiny, she informed him that she fled from the face of her mistress; upon which, without making any further remarks, he commanded her immediately to return to her master's house, and to her former obedience to her mistress.

However, to encourage her in the prosecution of her duty, he assured her, that her seed should be exceedingly multiplied: and to convince her of the divinity of his mission, not only acquainted her that he knew of her conception, which was not yet discoverable to the sight, but gave her precise directions with respect to the naming of the child she then conceived,—a circumstance of great consequence, and one of the principal superstitions of the Egyptians. 'Thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.'

It appears, that though Hagar was an Egyptian, she had imbibed from Abram just notions of the true God, and of the worship due to him from his creatures, as well as the immediate interposition of his providence on particular occasions, for the well was called Beer-la-hai-roi, that is, 'the well of the living vision,' or 'the well of him that liveth and seeth me.'

Being thus admonished and encouraged by the heavenly messenger, she returned to her former service, submitted herself to her mistress, and was kindly received.

In due time she was delivered of a son, whom Abram, according to the angel's direction, called Ishmael.

Abram being now eighty-six years old, it pleased God, lest in his extreme joy he should deem the child of his handmaid the earnest of the fulfilment of the great promises that God had made him, to defer the blessing yet thirteen years longer; for when he was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared unto him, and thus spake: 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.' Struck with the solemn, yet gracious address, the patriarch fell prostrate before his God, when the Lord was pleased to resume his discourse; and; as a farther confirmation of the respect he bore unto him, changed his name from Abram to Abraham.*

To ratify the covenant thus solemnly made, God was pleased to institute the rite of circumcision, as a seal or pledge of the same, commanding that every male child, of eight days old, whether born in the house, or bought with money, should be circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh, on pain of being cut off from the covenant, and deemed an alien from the commonwealth of Israel.

Accordingly, Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all that were bought with his money, even every male in his house, the very day in which God commanded him, and performed on them the rite of circumcision.

His former name, Abram, denotes 'a high father;' but his new name, Abraham, signifies, 'a father of a great multitude,' as he certainly was, according to the divine promise, Gen. xvii. 5. 'A father of many nations have I made thee.'

father of many nations have I made thee.'

† God enjoined Abraham to use circumcision
as a sign of his covenant; and he repeated the
precept to Moses, and ordered that all who in-

Having changed the name of Abram into that of Abraham, it seemed meet unto Divine wisdom to change the name of his wife from Sarai to Sarah,‡ promising at the same time by her to raise up seed to his faithful servant.

CHAPTER IV.

Abraham entertains three Angels.—Intercedes with God in behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah.

—Dreadful judgment inflicted on Lot's wife.

—Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.—
Lot's incest.—Birth of Isaac, and rejection of Hagar and Ishmael.—Abraham's covenant with Abimelech.—Abraham offers up his son Isaac at the divine command.

NOTWITHSTANDING the exceeding joy which Abraham received from the promise of an heir from the body of his wife Sarah, his parental affection for Ishmael, his first-born, and suspicion that on the

tended to partake of the paschal sacrifice should receive circumcision; and that this right should be performed on children on the eighth day after their birth. The Jews have always been very exact in observing this ceremony, and it appears they did not neglect it when in Egypt. The law mentions no-thing of the minister, or the instrument, of circumcision; which were left to the discretion of the people. They generally used a knife or razor, or sharp stone, Exod. iv. 25. Josh. v. 3. The ceremonies observed in circumcision are particularly described by Leo of Modena, (cap. viii.) and may also be seen in Allen's Modern Judaism. The Arabians, Saracens, and Ishmaelites, who, as well as the Hebrews, sprung from Abraham, practised circumcision, but not as an essential rite to which they were bound on pain of being cut off from their people. Circumcision was introduced with the law of Moses among the Samaritans, Cuthwans, and Idumwans. Those who assert, that the Phænicians were circumcised, mean probably the Samaritans; for we know, from other authority, that the Phœnicians did not observe this ceremony. As to the Egyptians, circumcision never was of general and indispensable obligation on the whole nation; certain priests only, and particular professions, were obliged to submit to it. Circumcision is never repeated. When the Jews admitted a proselyte of another nation, if he had received circumcision, [concision,] they were satisfied with drawing some drops of blood from the part usually circumcised; which blood was called 'the blood of the covenant.'- Calmet.

‡ The word Sarai signifies 'my princess,' or chief of my family only; but Sarah signifies, 'the princess,' or 'chief of multitudes,' according to Gen. xvii. 16. 'She shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be of her.'

might be deprived of that descended from the bond-woman, caused him most cordially to cry out, 'O that Ishmael might live before thee!'

The Lord therefore, in his infinite goodness, soon cleared up his doubt, and to prevent his thinking that Ishmael had any share in the covenant established between them, assured him, that his wife Sarah should conceive, and bear him a son, through whose loins the promise should be fulfilled, though at the same time he had favourable respect unto Ishmael. 'As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.'

But farther, to strengthen his faith in God's promise, the precise time at which Sarah should bear a son is mentioned, which was the very next year; and, lest he should admit the least doubt of the precise accomplishment of the long desired event, God appeared to him in a different shape, as a farther confirmation of the truth of his word.

As the patriarch was one day at his tent door * for the benefit of the air, he

* The patriarchs pitched their tents where they pleased, and, it should seem, under the shade of trees whenever this was practicable. Thus Abraham's tent was pitched under a tree in the plains of Mamre. In the East, to this day, it is the custom in many places to plant about and among their buildings trees, which grow both high and broad, and afford a cooling and refreshing shade. It appears from 1 Kings iv. 25. that this practice anciently obtained in Judea, and that vines and fig-trees were commonly used for this purpose. These trees furnished two great articles of food for their consumption, and the cuttings of their vines would be useful to them for fuel. The tents of the emirs and sovereigns of the East are both large and magnificent, and furnished with costly hangings. Those of the Turcomans are said to be black and those of the Turks green: but, according to D'Arvieux, Dr Shaw, and M. Volney, the tents of the Bedouins, or Arabs of the Desert, are universally black, or of a very dusky brown. To these the bride in the Canticles compares herself (i. 5.)—I am black (or tawney) as the tents of Kedar, but comely, or beautiful as the curtains of Solo-

birth of a child by the free-woman, he espied three persons, whom he took for men, coming towards him; and, according to the custom of those times, rose from his seat, ran to meet them, and saluted them by bowing himself toward the

> mon. In the East, those who lead a pastoral life frequently sit (as Abraham did) in the tent door in the heat of the day. The Arabian tents are of an oblong figure, supported according to their size, some with one pillar, others with two or three, while a curtain or carpet, occasionally let down from each of these divisions, converts the whole into so many separate apartments. These tents are kept firm and steady by bracing or stretching down their eaves with cords, tied to hooked wooden pins, well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet: one of these pins answering to the nail, as the mallet does to the hammer, which Jael used in fastening the temples of Sisera to the ground. (Judg. iv. 21.) In these dwellings the Arabian shepherds and their families repose upon the bare ground, or with only a mat or carpet beneath them. Those who are married have each of them a portion of the tent to themselves separated by a curtain. The more opulent Arabs, however, always have two tents, one for themselves, and another for their wives, besides others for their servants; in like manner, a particular tent was allotted to Sarah. (Gen. xxiv. 67.) When travelling, they were careful to pitch their tents near some river, fountain, or well. (1 Sam. xxix. 1; xxx. 21.) In countries subject to violent tempests as well as to intolerable heat, a portable tent is a necessary part of a traveller's baggage, both for defence and shelter.

> The description given by the intelligent traveller Mr Buckingham of the tent of the Sheik of Barak, who was at the head of a tribe of Turcomans, wandering in the vicinity of Aleppo, will enable us to form some idea of the shape and ar-rangement of the tent of the patriarch, Abraham. "The tent occupied a space of about thirty feet square, and was formed by one large awning supported by twenty-four small poles in four rows of six each, the ends of the awning being drawn out by cords fastened to pegs in the ground. Each of these poles giving a pointed form to the part of the awning, which it supported, the outside looked like a number of umbrella tops, or small Chinese spires. The half of this square was open in front and at the sides, having two rows of poles clear, and the third was closed by a reeded partition, behind which was the apartment for females, surrounded entirely by the same kind of matting. The form of Abraham's tent, as thus described, seems to have been exactly like the one in which we sit: for in both there was a shaded open front in which he could sit in the heat of the day, and yet be seen from afar off; and the apartment of the females, where Sarah was, when he stated her to be within the tent, was immediately behind this, wherein she prepared the meal for the guests, and from whence she listened to their prophetic

declaration."-Horne.

ground. Still imagining them to be some of the descendants of Adam, liable to fatigue, and therefore desirous of refreshment; he importunes them to stay and partake of whatever his habitation afforded, before they pursued their journey.

On their accepting his invitation, necessary preparations were made for their entertainment, at which the patriarch attended in person. In the course of their conversation, one of them inquired concerning his wife, and on his informing him, that she was in the tent, to his surprise and astonishment, thus bespoke him: 'I will certainly return unto thee, according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.' By this Abraham was convinced beyond doubt, that these three visitants were messengers from heaven, and that one of them was the peculiar representative of the Almighty. Sarah had listened attentively to the discourse that passed between her husband and his strange guests; but, considering the advanced age both of herself and her husband, she regarded not their prediction, esteeming the common order of nature rather than the infallible promise of the God of truth and omnipotence, and even laughed within herself at the improbability of such an event. Though this impious behaviour was severely reprimanded by the divine messenger, yet she denied that she had laughed, till it was positively fixed upon her in these words, 'Nay, but thou didst laugh.'

This finished the conversation, the strangers prepared to depart, and the patriarch finding they intended to go towards Sodom, accompanied them on their way. As they journeyed together, God was pleased to manifest his peculiar regard to Abraham, in foretelling the dreadful judgment he intended to inflict upon Sodom, which instance of his kindness was founded upon an assurance that Abraham would command not only his children, but his household after him, to persevere in the true fear and worship of God.

While the Lord was relating his design upon that city of abomination, the two angels departed and proceeded towards the same; but Abraham continued in converse with the Lord, and even ventured. from an assurance of the divine favour, to intercede for that wicked city. Imagining the supreme and equitable Judge of the earth would do right; the patriarch mediates for Sodom, in six petitionary propositions, lessening the supposed number of pious inhabitants from fifty to ten; that even on their account the Lord would withdraw his avenging rod and avert the impending danger: this request was granted by his Creator to the father of the faithful, who returned home abundantly satisfied with such peculiar tokens of the divine love. The other two guests, who set out from the tent of Abraham, pursued their journey towards Sodom, and arrived there in the evening. Righteous Lot, who sat in the gate of the city, hastily rose up to meet them, and having saluted them in the usual manner, invited them to refresh and repose themselves that night with him.*

The benevolence and hospitality of Lot are remarkable in the importunities which he used to the angels, especially as he was then settled among a people who were insolent on account of their wealth, void of humanity towards men, or piety towards God, strangers to hospitality, and lost to every principle of goodness. Amidst this sink of vice Lot remained untainted, and

^{*} In the Eastern countries of late some few caravansaries have been set up; but in Lot's time there were no inns for the accommodation of strangers: so that travellers, unless invited to a private house, were forced to lie all night in the streets. It was customary therefore for those of the better sort to receive travellers, whether or not they knew them, into their houses, and entertain them with great civility. For this reason we meet, both in sacred and profane authors, with such large commendations of this act of hospitality; and particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. xiii. 2. we have a precept to this effect, alluding to this very history: 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'—Stackhouse.

his uncle Abraham.

Such was his importunity, that the divine messengers were prevailed upon to accept the invitation; but before they retired to rest many of the vile inhabitants of that corrupted city encompassed the house of Lot, commanding him, on pain of sustaining much damage, to bring out the strangers which sojourned with him, that they might know them.

The poor old man at first endeavoured, by gentle means, to quell the outrage, desiring them to suffer the strangers to remain in his house unmolested, as they had committed themselves to his care and protection; nay, so great was his concern for the safety and honour of his guests, that, to appease the insatiable lust of the Sodomites, he even made an unjustifiable proffer of his two virgin daughters, which, though undoubtedly an error in Lot, demonstrates how inviolably sacred the laws of hospitality were held in those days amongst the just and good. But the Sodomites were so abandoned to wickedness, and so deaf to every remonstrance of reason, justice, and virtue, that they freed him from the disagreeable necessity of exposing his daughters, though he was determined not to give up his guests; commanding him to stand back, and remain quiet, remembering that he was but a sojourner among them, and therefore not entitled to direct their conduct and behaviour, and threatening him moreover with very rigorous treatment, if he presumed any farther to interrupt them.

Finding all their threatenings ineffectual, they determined to effect that by force which they could not by fear; and, pressing hard, attempted to break the door; but the divine messengers prevented their iniquitous design, by pulling Lot into the house, shutting the door, and, through an exertion of supernatural power, bringing on the rioters a temporary blindness, insomuch that they departed, being

seems to have rivalled the hospitality of rendered incapable of finding out the house.*

> When they had an opportunity of conversing, without interruption, the heavenly guests inquired of their host concerning his family, assuring him, that the Almighty had determined to destroy that abominable city; and admonishing him immediately to remove from thence, with his whole family, and all his possessions.

> Thus warned, Lot informed those who were betrothed to his daughters, of the awful event that so nearly approached, advising them to go with him, and so avoid the general ruin: but they derided the counsel he gave them, and were involved in the common destruction.

> As soon as the earliest dawn of the ensuing day appeared, the heavenly messengers hastened the departure of Lot; saying, 'Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.' The good man rather lingered, hoping the sentence against this wretched people might be revoked; but his delay was in vain, for instead of ten righteous, that Abraham had capitulated for, no more than four, and all those of Lot's family (himself included), were appointed to escape the dreadful judgment, ready to be executed on this abominable race: knowing therefore the necessity of immediate departure, the angels took him, his wife, and two daughters, by force, and brought them out of the city; and bid them hasten for their lives, nor look back, nor stay upon the plain, lest they were consumed with this wicked people.

^{*} It is a probable opinion, that these men were struck, not with actual blindness, but with a dizziness, which disturbed their sight, and represented objects falsely and in confusion, in the same manner as the Syrians were, when sent to take Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 18. And this was no hard matter for the angels to do, by making a small alteration, either in their sight or in the air, whereby either the door might appear to them like the solid wall, or the several parts of the wall like so many doors. -Poole and Le Clerc.

Lot finding the mountain to which he | Gomorrah, and the rest of the sinful cities was warned to escape was very remote, entreated of the angels that they might be permitted to direct their course to a little adjacent city which was then called Bela,* but afterwards Zoar, or the little city. Lot's request was granted by the angels, who commanded him to hasten thither, adding as an encouragement, 'I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.'

Lot, his wife, and daughters, were particularly warned from looking back, and enjoined by every means to hasten their escape; yet before they reached Zoar, the city of refuge, his wife, prompted by some fatal curiosity, looked back, was turned into a pillar of salt,+ and became a standing monument of God's vengeance on obstinate offenders, and the flagrant disobedience of a positive command. Lot and his daughters, however, proceeded on their journey according to the divine command, and arrived at the city of Zoar by sunrise. And now the Almighty arm of an incensed God prepares the awful judgment ready to be executed against Sodom,

of the plain. Showers of liquid fire in-

stantaneously fall, and the guilty wretches

are consumed in a moment. ‡

* This city was the residence of one of the five tributary kings, who fought with the four kings, and were driven into the vale of Siddim.

+ To anticipate the ridicule of the atheist and libertine, we observe in this place; that the salt into which the wife of Lot was turned, was not of the common, but metallic kind, which was hewn out of the rocks, like marble, and used to build houses, according to the testimony of several eminent writers. From hence this expression has been taken in a metaphorical sense, as a firm and sure covenant is called a covenant of salt, Num. xviii. 19. From the durableness of its nature the word metallic should indeed have been added in our translation.

How long this pillar continued we know not. Josephus says it remained in his time, which was near two thousand years after it was formed. næus and Tertullian say it was standing about A. D. 200. Benjamin of Tudela, the Jewish traveller, avers that it was standing near one thousand years after, which would make its duration of about three thousand years. Some modern travellers pretend to have seen it; but their relations savour so strongly of fable, and differ so widely, that we cannot credit them. It is certain that Maundrell, Shaw, and other travellers of veracity, do not pretend that there are now the least remains of the noted statue.

‡ Sodom was built upon a mine of bitumen, as we know from the testimony of Moses and Jose-phus, who speak of wells abounding with bitumen in the valley of Siddim. Lightning pointed by the hand of Omnipotence kindled the combustible mass, and the cities sunk in the subterraneous conflagration. Nor is the ingenious suggestion of Malte Brun to be omitted, that Sodom and Gomorrah themselves might have been built by bituminous stone, and then set in flames by the hand of heaven. The Dead sea, or Asphaltites, now covers the fruitful vale where once flourished the cities of the plain,-a vale so rich and beautiful that the sacred historian compares it to the garden of paradise. Not satisfied with overthrowing the cities, and destroying the inhabitants, the righteous Judge also overthrew all the plain, that is, he consumed its productions, he destroyed its beauty, he extinguished the very principles of its fertility, and submerged the ground itself under the waters of the Jordan, that the foot of man might never tread it more. The destruction was complete and irreparable: the country was in a manner blotted out from the map of Palestine, by converting it into a deep lake,—so fierce was the indignation, so ter-rible was the overthrow. The lake Asphaltites is inclosed on the east and west with exceeding high mountains; on the north it is bounded with the plain of Jericho, on which side it receives the waters of the Jordan; on the south it is open, and extends beyond the reach of the eye. It is said to be twenty-four leagues long, and six or seven broad; and is fringed with a kind of coppice of bushes or reeds. In the midst of this border, not a furlong from the sea, rises a fountain of brackish water, which was pointed out to Maundrell by his Arab conductor; a sure proof that the soil is not equally impregnated with saline particles. ground to the distance of half an hour from the sea, is uneven, and broken into hillocks, which Mr Maundrell compares to ruinous lime-kilns; but whether these might be the pits at which the kings of Sodom and Gomorrali were overthrown by the four kings who invaded their country, he could not determine. The water of the lake is intensely salt, extremely bitter and nauseous, and so heavy, that the most impetuous winds can scarcely ruffle its surface. It is called by common writers the Dead sea, because it nourishes neither animal nor vegetable life. No verdure is to be seen on its banks, nor fish to be found within its waters; but it is not true that, its exhalations are so pestiferous as to kill birds that attempt to fly over it. Mr Maundrell saw several birds flying about, and skimming the surface of its waters, without any visible harm. The same fact is attested by Volney, who states it as no uncommon thing to see swallows dipping for the water necessary to build their nests. The true cause that deprives it of vegetables and animals, is the extreme saltness of the water, which is vastly stronger than that of the sea. The soil around it, impregnated also with

cities, and doubting his safety in Zoar, withdrew with his two daughters to the mountains, and there dwelt with them in

salt, produces no plants; and the air itself, which becomes loaded with saline particles from evaporation, and which receives also the sulphureous and bituminous vapours, cannot be favourable to vegetation: hence the deadly aspect which reigns around this lake. The ground about it, however, is not marshy, and its waters are limpid and incorruptible, as must be the case with a dissolution of sait. Mr Maundrell questions the truth of the common tradition, which is admitted by Volney in all its extent, that the waters of the Dead sea are destructive to animal existence, having observed among the pebbles on the shore two or three shells of fish, resembling oyster-shells. That respectable traveller, willing to make an experiment of its strength, went into it, and found it bore up his body in swimming, with an uncommon force; but the relation of some authors, that men wading into it are buoyed up to the top as soon as the water reaches to the middle, he found, upon experiment, untrue. A recent traveller, on visiting the laké, found a crust of salt covering the surface of the ground, and resembling a snowy plain, from which a few stunted shrubs reared their heads. No murmur, no cooling breeze announced the approach to its margin. The strand bestrewed with stones was hot, the waters of the lake were motionless, and absolutely dead along the shore: he found it impossible to keep the water in his mouth; it far exceeded that of the sea in saltness, and produced upon the lips the effect of a strong solution of alum. Before his boots were completely dry, they were covered with salt; his clothes, his hat, his hands, in less than three hours, were impregnated with this mineral. Desirous to see the remains, if any existed, of those cities anciently situated in this place, and made so dreadful an example of divine vengeance, Maundrell diligently surveyed the waters as far as his eye could reach; but he could neither discern any heaps of ruin, nor any smoke ascending above the surface of the waters, as is usually described in the writings and maps of geographers. But he states, what was constantly attested to him by the father guardian, and procurator of Jerusalem, both men in years, and seemingly not destitute either of sense or probity, that they had once actually seen one of these ruins; that it was so near the shore, and the water so shallow at that time, that they, together with some Frenchmen, went into it, and found there several pillars, and other fragments of buildings. The cause of his being deprived of this sight was, he supposes, the height of the water.—Paxton's Scrip. Illust.

"Whoever," says Mr Carne, "has seen the

Dead sea, will ever after have its aspect impressed on his memory; it is, in truth, a gloomy and fearful spectacle. The precipices in general descend abruptly into the lake, and, on account of their height, it is seidom agitated by the winds: its shores are not visited by any footstep, save that of the wild Arab, and he holds it in superstitious

Lot, observing the calamity of the other | a cave. In this retirement happened a most melancholy event, which doubtless grieved the righteous soul of Lot: this was the commission of a crime no less flagrant than incest; for his two daughters, having lost their espoused husbands in the destruction of Sodom, and despairing of having any others, for they thought the late conflagrations had extended to the whole human race, excepting their own family, agreed upon a scheme to seduce their innocent father, in order to preserve the race of mankind. Whatever might be their motive, it is a melancholy truth, that they had a most wicked and unnatural design upon their father; and as they knew from his virtuous disposition, that so long as he retained his reason they could not obtain the same, they resolved to draw him in to drink insensibly; till his sense was impaired, though not his strength.

The eldest daughter, who was most forward in promoting the impious design, persuaded the old man, under pretence of recruiting his spirits after the late alarming circumstance, to drink till he became stupified, and having put him to rest, went to bed to him, where having perpetrated the horrid incest, she arose again, without the old man's perceiving when she arose and when she lay down.

The following night the youngest daughter, at the example and instigation of her sister, committed the same detestable offence, and arose in the same manner, unperceived by her father.*

dread. On some parts of the rocks there is a thick sulphureous incrustation, which appears foreign to their substance; and in their steep descents there are several deep caverns, where the benighted Bedouin sometimes finds a home."

^{*} He who could not be tainted with uncleanness in Sodom, is overtaken with drunkenness and incest in a cave. Rather than Satan shall not want baits, his own daughters will prove Sodomites. Those which should have comforted, betrayed him. How little are some hearts moved with judgments! The ashes of Sodom, and the pillar of salt, were not yet out of their eye, when they dare think of lying with their own father. They knew, that whilst Lot was sober, he could not be unchaste. Drunkenness is the way to all bestial affections and

ous congress; and Lot became, from the vicious plot of his children, both father and grandfather, to the shameful progeny: but justly shocked at the unnatural and sinful commerce, we do not find that he so much as gave them a name; for they were named by the mothers, a very uncommon practice in those days, - the eldest daughter calling her son Moab, and the younger naming hers Ben-ammi: they both proved in process of time inveterate enemies to the Israelites, particularly the race of the former.

As sacred history is silent, after this black circumstance, concerning the transactions of Lot, we proceed to consider the peculiar dealings of Providence with that eminent servant of God, Abraham.

The pious patriarch abode in Mamre, till he had been eye-witness to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; after which awful dispensation of divine Providence, he removed from thence to the southward, and took up his abode in Gerar, the chief city of Palestine.

Here the patriarch had recourse to the same policy which he practised before, and an agreement passed between him and his wife, that they should call each brother and sister. The king of Gerar,* suppos-

They both conceived from the incestu- | ing that was the alliance between them, caused Sarah to be taken from Abraham. intending to take her for his concubine,+ but the Almighty warned him in a dream from committing the iniquitous act, by assuring him that death would be the penalty of taking to his bed a woman whose husband was a prophet.

Abimelech alleged in vindication of his design, that Abraham had given out that the woman was his sister, and sending for the patriarch, reprimanded him very severely for imposing on him, who had treated him with the kindest offices of

friendship.

Abraham plainly told him, he made the report to save his life, fearing he might be slain for the sake of his wife, though he had not lied in the same, for she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. As Abimelech had experienced the divine interposition in the behalf of Abraham, his anger soon subsided, and to assure the patriarch of the continuance of his favour, he restored to him his wife, with very valuable presents, and gave him full liberty of settling in any part of his country he might choose as the most agreeable residence.

He likewise did peculiar honour to Sarah in these words; 'Behold I have given to thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee; and with all other: thus she was reproved, 't or rather justified.

* Gerar was a regal city, situate not far from the angle where the south and west sides of Palestine meet; and the country to which it gave the name extended itself pretty far into Arabia Petræa. The kings were generally called by the title of Abimelech, as those of Egypt were called by that

Pharaoh.

acts. Wine knows no difference either of persons or sins. No doubt Lot was afterwards ashamed of his incestnous seed, and now wished he had come alone out of Sodom; yet even this unnatural bed was blessed with increase; and one of our Saviour's worthy ancestors sprung after from this line. God's election is not tied to our means, neither are blessings or curses ever traduced. The chaste bed of holy parents hath ofttimes bred a monstrous generation; and contrarily, God hath raised sometimes an holy seed from the drunken bed of incest, or fornication. It hath been seen, that weighty ears of corn have grown out of the compass of the tilled field: thus will God magnify the freedom of his own choice, and let us know that we are not born, but made, good .- Hall.

⁺ Sarah was now ninety years old when Abimelech took her into his family; whence it may seem very strange that a woman of her age should look so very well, as to be desired by a king, who in those days might have commanded the most youthful beauties in his whole dominions. But, according to some interpreters, people of ninety then were as fresh and vigorous as those of forty now; and Sarah might, even in that respect, excel her coevals, by reason of her sterility, which is a great preserver of beauty: though others are of opinion, that God, having taken away her sterility, her beauty returned with her friutfulness, for by this time, it is computed, that she had conceived her son .- Howell. I There is here a most flagrant error in our

sinful commerce with Sarah by a dream, but also by afflicting him with a kind of impotence; but now, at the intercession of Abraham, his health and fertility were happily restored.

The long expected promise was now fulfilled to the waiting patriarch, who was blessed with the sight of an heir from the body of Sarah his wife, though they were both advanced in years.

Whatever eternal truth hath said, Almighty power is concerned to execute. God had said it, and behold! Sarah is delivered of a son, who is called by his father, according to former direction, Isaac, (signifying laughter,) and, in obedience to the divine command, circumcised when he was eight days old.

It is difficult to conceive the joy of the aged pair on this auspicious event; greatly did they rejoice in experiencing that the promises of God were all yea, and amen. Now might Sarah laugh with joy, and not with distrust as she had done before. the birth of Isaac was cause of exceeding consolation to Sarah, so, on the other hand, it could not fail of being matter of disgust to Hagar, who, from the advanced age of her mistress, had most probably flattered herself that her son should be honoured with being her master's heir.

The mother and son could not long stifle the resentment of so affecting a disappointment, for soon after Isaac was weaned, his mother detected Ishmael in mocking him, or treating him with derision and ridicule. Incensed that so flagrant an insult should be offered her son, by the

translation. The word rendered reproved never has that meaning; but signifies to search or inquire into a thing till it is cleared and put beyond a doubt. Besides, reproof in this case would have been very absurd, for Abraham had already justified Sarah. It should therefore be rendered justified; the design of Abimelech, by this bounty, being to justify Sarah's virtue, it being the custom in those days to confirm the truth of any thing that had been doubtful by presents, see Gen. xxi. and xxx.

God had not only awed the king from | child of a bond-woman, Sarah importuned her husband to turn Hagar and her son out of his habitation, intimating that the son of a slave had no title to heirship, which solely belonged to her son Isaac.

> The good old patriarch was brought to a very intricate situation, and from the love he bore to Ishmael undetermined how to proceed; but that gracious God who had directed him in every important case, soon confirmed his resolution. 'Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman: in all that Sarah hath said unto thee hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.'

> Thus determined by the divine appointment, Hagar once more becomes a wanderer, nor could the fondness of Abraham for her son Ishmael prevent her fate: it was the Lord's command, nor durst the patriarch refuse to obey, but having supplied her with some bread and a bottle of water, he dismissed her, and she wandered about in the deserts of Beersheba.*

> * The wilderness of Beersheba, or Shur, lying at the north-eastern extremity of the Red sea, and forming the northern part of the great Arabian Desert, is, according to the testimony of those who have crossed it, a vast expanse of uninhabited country, which, by the straightest route from north to south, cannot be traversed in less than about forty days; and it is so wild and desolate a region, that it seems to have been doomed by the Creator to the curse of perpetual sterility. Throughout the whole extent of it not a blade of verdure is to be seen, nor the voice of living thing to be heard, and but for a few hardy plants-the tamarind and acacia, which here and there strike their roots into the clefts of the rocks, and, nourished by the dews of night, "waste their sweetness on the desert air"-there would be nothing to dispel the feeling which this dismal scene strongly produces, that here was a region where nature was wholly dead.

> The springs are but few and scanty all over the desert, in that part especially where Ishmael wan-dered, a traveller who crossed it having found only four in the space of a hundred and fifteen miles, situated at the distance of four, six, and even eight days' journey from each other; and, besides the danger of missing them, always liable to happen in a trackless solitude, but particularly so in the wilderness of Paran, which in many places is full of rugged and precipitous cliffs, around the base of

had long rambled in vain, seeking water down at a considerable distance, that she in a parched country to allay the thirst of might not behold the dying pangs of her her perishing child, she placed him at the

When her bottle was empty, and she foot of a tree, and went herself and sat beloved Ishmael.

which the traveller has to seek his way; it may happen, that after the greatest exertions have been made to reach these springs, they are found entirely choked with the moving sand, or that they prove, to the mortification of the luckless traveller, so impregnated with brackish qualities, from the beds of sulphur or salt over which they roll, as to increase, instead of allaying, his already insufferable intensity of thirst. And then follows a scene of the most dreadful and protracted sufferings which a human being can experience. The burning thirst, rendered more violent by the fierce heat of the glowing firmament and the fiery sand, produces an intense agony in every part of the frame, and the dry and contracted feeling of the skin, the eyes appearing like balls of coagulated blood, the unnatural swelling and hardness of the tongue and lips, increasing difficulty of seeing and hearing, the total loss of speech, together with the most painful sensations in the throat; all these, which are invariable consequences of unalleviated thirst, indicate a universal derangement of the bodily system, produce languor and insensibility, and at last bring the unhappy sufferer, after many a struggle, to drop on the ground, happy if, like Ishmael, he can purchase a brief respite from his misery, by sheltering his scorched head under one of the dwarfish acacias that are strewed around. In such circumstances, it is said that five hundred dollars have been given for a draught of water. But, in general, where one is placed in such extremities, all who are with him are, more or less, in a similar state of distress; and then no bribe, however great, no entreaties, however importunate, can procure a single drop; for of what use would all the wealth of the Indies be in a place where death would be the inevitable consequence of parting with the precious beverage? The master of a whole caravan is then not better privileged than the meanest of his slaves; and, as the desire of self-preservation triumphs over every consideration, when one drops the victim of thirst, his companions, however they may commiserate the sufferer, are obliged to pass on without delay, and abandon him to his fate. how terrible such a situation, to be exposed in a savage interminable desert! In vain does he exert his expiring energies, in a last effort to cry out for help, or to hoist the signal of distress. Not a soul is near to whisper the accent of sympathy, or to pour a drop of water on his burning lips; not even an echo responds to his cries, and he lies there, dreaming of the murmur of limpid streams, and of wandering along the verdant banks, and stooping to swallow the delicious draught, till the effort to obey the impulse of imagination dissipates the enchantment, and awakens him to all the horrible realities of his situation,-a helpless and forsaken wanderer, perishing for thirst in a vast howling

No general description, however, of the misery of such a situation can convey so vivid a picture of Ishmael's distress as the unvarnished and circum-

stantial narratives of those who have had the courage to brave, and the good fortune to survive, the perils of the same, or a similar scene. And, to the reader of the Bible, who meets, both in the story of the son of Hagar, and the travels of the Israelites in the wilderness, with several notices of this kind of distress, which the rapid narrative of Moses introduces only by incidental allusion, an important and grateful service may be rendered by subjoining the most interesting particulars of the accounts of some individuals who have felt all the horrors consequent on a failure of water in the Arabian desert. The following occurrence, related by a French traveller, awakens a melancholy interest, both from the number of persons who were overtaken with the calamity, and the disastrous consequences with which it was attended. The caravan belonged to a Turk who speculated in the slave trade, and who having with great care, and at a great expense, reared and educated some female slaves he possessed, was on his way to dispose of them at the market of Bagdad. They had taken with them a copious supply of water, and had calculated on being able to renew it at a well which they had to pass; but, to their great disappointment, they found it completely dried, and they were reduced, in consequence, to the greatest dis-The first object that struck the eye of the Frenchman as he approached, was the owner of the caravan running about in a state of distraction, and bewailing, in most doleful terms, his situation, and the ruin of his fortunes; on a nearer view a spectacle was disclosed that would have wrung pity out of the hardest heart. In the midst of twelve eunuchs and about a hundred camels, was a band of two hundred girls of most exquisite beauty, of from twelve to lifteen years of age, lying on the ground in a state approaching to insensibility, produced by excessive fatigue and thirst. Some had already sunk under their distress, and were thrown into a pit dug for the purpose; the greater part, however, showed, by their panting bosoms and imploring looks, that they were still alive, but so faint and feeble that had water been within their reach, they could not have made the necessary exertion to carry it to their lips. The air was rent with the piercing cries of the dying girls, and many a wistful eye was cast on the traveller and his companions for a drop of the precious fluid. Deeply affected by such a scene, he was proceeding to open his leathern bottle, and to distribute its contents among as many as possible of the pitiable objects, when his guide rushing forward with the peremptory exclamation: " Madman, wouldst thou have us also perish of thirst," dashed off the unfortunate slaves, seized hold of the water skin, and threatened with instant death the first who ventured to touch it. The traveller, knowing that the ruthless Arab was in the right, and was acting as his own friend, was obliged to yield to the cruel necessity; and, as their departure from the scene of horror took away the last ray of hope from the perishing girls, a

A melancholy scene ensued, the feeble | by an oath, and a difference composed tongue of the child begged relief from the tender mother, whose woes were doubled by her want of power; his pressing demands could only be answered by her gushing tears, and they had no other prospect before them than despair and death. But the ears of boundless mercy are ever open to the cries of distress; and the hand of bounty is ever ready to dispense aid to the indigent; for in this most desperate situation the Lord heard, the Lord pitied, the Lord relieved. A cheering promise was given to the fainting handmaid, and a well of water supplied for the refreshment of the expiring child.

The mother and son afterwards took up their abode in the wilderness of Paran, where the Lord blessed them, and Ishmael becoming an expert archer, furnished both himself and mother with necessary provisions. When he arrived to years of maturity, his mother, being an Egyptian, took him a wife out of her native country.

Abraham having received so many tokens of respect at the hands of Abimelech, accepts of the invitation to reside in his country; and the king observing the success with which it pleased God to crown all the undertakings of the pious patriarch, who now became very powerful, and fearing, lest in future time his influence should become so great as to endanger the security of his crown, at the instigation of Phicol, the general of all his forces, he entered into a league of friendship with Abraham.

The treaty being made and confirmed

shriek of despair was raised, every one crying out with frantic vehemence for death to come and relieve them from their sufferings.-It was a most distressing scene; even the Arab, not unused to such spectacles, could no longer resist; he took one that lay nearest him, poured a drop of water on her burning lips, and placed her behind him on his camel, with the view of presenting her as a present to his wife. The poor slave fainted several times as she parted from the spot,-but being borne across the desert at a rapid pace by her deliverers, was spared the agony of witnessing the death that inevitably awaited her less fortunate companions. -Rev. Robert Jamieson.

concerning a well of water, which Abraham had digged, and Abimelech's servants, without the knowledge of their master, had forcibly seized; but now, on the patriarch's complaint, was restored to him. Abraham, as a token of friendship, presented some sheep and oxen to Abimelech, who, with his general, took leave and returned to his court, while the patriarch planted a grove,* in Beersheba, and called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

The Lord in his wise providence had already, in divers instances, and on many occasions, put Abraham's faith and obedience to the test; but now he tries him in the tenderest point, + a point in which every tie of parental affection bound him, and to give up which, required a degree of resignation, uncommon to the best of men. He is required, by his God, to sacrifice his son, to imbrue his hands in the blood of a darling child.

Ishmael was now to him no more; he had parted with him at the divine command, and transferred his affection wholly to Isaac; and this son, this only son, who

 Though this grove was planted from force of custom and example, it being the universal practice of the heathens to plant groves and therein set up their idols and altars, yet Abraham followed not their idolatry, but called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

⁺ The words in the text are, 'that God did tempt Abraham,' but God is said to tempt no man; and therefore all that he could be supposed to do in this case, was only to make trial of him; and that too, not to inform himself of the sincerity and steadiness of his faith, but in order to the holy patriarch's own justification, and to make him an illustrious pattern of an entire dependence on the Almighty, to future saints and confessors. The Jews reckon up ten trials of Abraham, of which Jews reckon up ten trais of Abraham, of which the last was the greatest. 1. God's command to him to leave his country. 2. The famine, which forced him to go into Egypt. 3. Pharaoh's taking his wife from him. 4. His war with the four kings. 5. His despair of having Isaac by Sarah, and marrying Hagar on that account. 6. His circumstants is his all ages 7. This circumstants with the sale ages 1. This circumstants with the sale ages 1. cision in his old age. 7. His wife's being again taken from him by Abimelech. 8. The expulsion of Hagar, when she was with child by him. 9. His expulsion of her and Ishmael. And, 10. His oblation of his only son Isaac.—Bibliotheca Bib.

had been given him by divine promise, execute a most awful injunction; but as and was the ground of his future expectation, must fall a victim, by the unalterable decree of heaven. Hard task to flesh and blood! Severe trial to human nature! But if the flesh shuddered, the spirit was resolute: God commands, the patriarch

Without hesitation, or the least delay, he rose early in the morning, and proceeded towards the place appointed by the Lord, which was the land of Moriah, accompanied only by his son Isaac, and attended by two servants, who led an ass, that carried the provisions, together with the wood, instruments, and other things necessary for the sacrifice. On the third day's journey, they came within sight of the place; when Abraham ordered his servants to stop with the ass, while he and the lad went on further to worship; which done, they would return to them again.

The harmless Isaac, ignorant of the design of his pious and affectionate parent, went on cheerfully with him; and the good old patriarch, relying on the faithfulness of the divine promise, overcame the strugglings of natural affection, that might have retarded his compliance with the will of God, and proceeded with a resolution worthy the father of the faithful.

Thus advanced the father and son to

they approached the appointed place; the lad observing that a lamb, the most essential requisite for the sacrifice, was wanting, innocently inquired of his father, where was the lamb for a burnt-offering? This inquiry could not but touch the affectionate parent in the most tender part, as it at once indicated the innocence and piety of the child: nevertheless, behold his reliance even yet on the faithfulness of an immutable God! 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.'

Being now arrived at the place of which God had told him, he built an altar, and having prepared the instruments, and laid the wood in order, embraced his son, and then bound him. The sacred historian, like a great painter, has drawn a veil over the sorrows of Abraham, and the resignation of Isaac, that the imagination of the reader might paint to him more forcibly, the struggles of the parent and the agonies of the son, than words can possibly express. Isaac was at this period about twenty-five years of age, and his father enfeebled with years; his resignation therefore must certainly have been volun-

Every preparation being now made, Abraham stretched forth his hand to give the finishing stroke to the life of his child,

^{*} That is, the land of vision, according to many interpreters, and shows that the words of our Lord, Abraham saw my day, alludes to this extraordin-ary circumstance. This mountain, whereon Abra-ham was ordered to offer his son Isaac, was certainly the same on which the temple was afterwards built by Solomon, and on part of which, namely, Mount Calvary, Christ did afterwards actually offer himself unto God for the redemption of mankind: which offering of his, as it seems to have been designedly prefigured by the intentional offering of Isaac; so it might seem good to divine reason to assign the same for the typical offering of Isaac, where, in due time, the antitype, our Redeemer, was to be offered. But, instead of Moriah, the Samaritans read Moreh, and pretend that God sent Abraham towards Shechem, where certainly was Moreh, and that it was to Mount Gerizim that Isaac was brought in order to be sacrificed. But this, in all probability, is no more than a contrivance to enhance the glory of their temple. - Wells and Calmet.

⁺ A strong and exact type of our blessed Redeemer, who voluntarily laid down his life for us; though no one could otherwise take it from him. in this tragical manner; yet such was his filial piety, such was his reverence of the high command, that he made no attempt to save his life, though he was able to have done it, being arrived at his youthful prime. Even so the innocent Redeemer, in whom was found no cause of death, no not by his very judge, he abhorred not the ignominious cross; he spared to employ all the legions of angels, that were ready at his beck; he never attempted to make his escape when his time was come, which he had often done before. Though he had thoroughly digested in his mind the doleful circumstances of his crucifixion, he betrayed no the least unwillingness to submit to his heavenly Father's will, even when his human heart shrunk at the bitter cup.-M'Ewen.

when, behold! God is satisfied with the resided at Kirjath-arba, where he buried faith and obedience of the father, and the piety and resignation of the son; a heavenly messenger is despatched to avert the fatal blow, and to assure the patriarch, that God had accepted this act of obedience as the strongest testimony of his faith and fear. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said. Abraham. Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad; neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.'

The obedient patriarch had no sooner taken off his eyes from the dear, though intended victim, than he beheld a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, which, as the gracious substitute of Providence, he immediately took and offered for a burntoffering instead of his beloved son.

On this infallible token of Abraham's obedience, the Lord was pleased to renew his gracious promise to him with enlarged abundance, and even to confirm the same by a most solemn oath: 'By myself have I sworn,' &c.

Having thus conformed to the divine will, and received a most convincing testimony of the divine approbation, Abraham and his son returned to his servants, and they went joyfully together to Beer-sheba, the place of his residence; whither, on his arrival, he was saluted with the welcome news of the increase of his family: for Milcah, the wife of his brother Nahor, had born Rebekah, who was afterwards wife to his son Isaac.

CHAPTER V.

Death of Sarah .- Abraham purchases a burialplace.-Procures Rebekah as wife for his son Isaac .- Death of Abraham .- Birth of Esau and Jacob .- Esau sells his birth-right.

THE sacred historian is silent with respect to the time that Abraham abode at Beersheba: but informs us, that he afterwards

his wife Sarah, who paid the debt of nature in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age.

Having observed the funeral ceremonies for his wife, he applied to the Hittires* for a place to bury his dead. The Hittites, paying a deference to the patriarch, who was a mighty man, and highly favoured by Providence, gave him the choice of their sepulchres for that necessary purpose.

Abraham acknowledged the favour, by bowing himself to the people of the land; but as his race was a peculiar generation, distinguished by God from all other nations, and therefore it was not lawful for them to mix with any other, he proposed to buy a piece of ground for a separate sepulchre for him and his family, and therefore desired them to entreat Ephron, the prince of the country, to sell him the cave of Machpelah,+ offering for it its utmost value.

Application being made to Ephron, he generously offered the patriarch not only the cave, but the whole field, as a bury-

* These Hittites were descended from Heth, the son of Canaan, and grandson of Ham, whom Noah had cursed, and then possessed that country.

The word Machpelah in Hebrew signifies double, whence it is supposed by some that there was one cave within another, or two or more contiguous to each other, in one of which Sarah was buried, and afterwards Abraham in another. But those who derive it from the Arabic, tell us, that in that language it signifies shut up, or walled up, which in Eastern countries was a common way of making their tombs, to prevent thieves from harbouring in them, or to hinder them from being in any manner vio-lated or profaned, and if this be the right derivation, then may the cave of Machpelah be translated, 'the cave that was shut up.'- Calmet.

[†] It is an observation of all those who have written about the sepulture of the ancients, that their dormitories or burying-places were never in cities, much less in temples or churches, but always in fields or gardens. According to Carne, the cave of Machpeluh has been covered by the Turks by a large and ancient mosque; and all around the soil is held inviolable. The cave is in the middle of the interior of the edifice; its dark and deep encave is said by the Turks to be deep and very spacious, cut out of the solid rock; and that the restingplaces of the patriarchs still exist, and are plainly to be discerned.

bounty of the offer; but as he had ever acted on a principle of strict justice, he desired the prince to fix a price upon the field; and that on such condition he would take possession of it for the purpose proposed.

The prince finding the patriarch thus resolved, told him the ground was worth four hundred shekels,* a sum beneath the consideration of a man of such immense property, and therefore desired he would immediately apply it to his use in bury-

ing his dead.

Abraham being told the price, immediately weighed + the money to Ephron, four hundred shekels, current money with the merchant, t in the presence of a great number of people, and the field was thereupon conveyed to him (according to the custom of those times) and his heirs for ever; and then, and not till then, did the patriarch bury his wife.

As Abraham was now stricken in age, being near an hundred and forty years old, he became naturally desirous of seeing his son married and settled, before his departure out of this transitory life. He therefore called to him an old and trusty servant, and having exacted from him a solemn oath, & laid strict charge upon him, that he would not take a wife for his son of the daughters of the Canaanites; and enjoined him to go to his own (Abraham's) country, and take a wife unto Isaac of his own kindred.

The servant having received so solemn an injunction from his master, began to reason to this effect, 'If the woman re-

Abraham acknowledged the fuse to follow me into the land of Canaan, must I return, and fetch thy son to her?" The patriarch immediately resolves in the negative, as no consideration could prevail upon him to suffer his son to return to a land which he himself had left on account of the inhumanity and idolatry of its inhabitants.

> To encourage, however, his servant in the prosecution of his intended expedition, he assured him that a heavenly messenger should go before him, and lead to the place from whence he should bring a wife unto his son; but that if the woman pitched upon should refuse to follow him, then he would be freed from the oath he had taken, as well as deemed to have discharged his whole duty.

> The servant having thus settled the matter with his master, set out with a number of attendants and camels, agreeable to the nature of his business, and the dignity of the person who despatched him, travelled till he arrived at Mesopotamia, and then repaired to Haran, the city of his master's brother Nahor; having doubtless heard that Milcah, his master's wife's sister, Nahor's wife, had born him several children, one of whom, named Bethuel, had a daughter named Rebekah.

> The servant arriving at Haran in the evening, caused his camels to rest themselves by a well of water without the city, just about the time when the women usually came out of the city to draw water. Having been educated by his master in the fear of God, and being sensible of the importance of the business, in which

^{*} This amounted to forty-six pounds, thirteen shillings and upwards.

[†] The money was weighed, because at that time no coinage was invented.

I This implies that no base metal was mixed with it, nor any artifice or fraud used to impose on the seller.

⁶ A common method of taking an oath among the Hebrews, and all the oriental nations, agreeable to the sacred historian, was for the person who swore, to put his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he swore,

Il Great was the simplicity and humility of these early days, when persons of the best rank, and of the female sex too, did not disdain to be employed in such servile offices. Thus, in the following age Jacob found his cousin Rachel watering her father's sheep: and, several ages after that, the seven daughters of Jethro, who was a prince as well as a priest of Midian, kept their father's flocks, and used to draw water for the cattle. So well has our author expressed that simplicity of manners, which we may observe in Homer, or Hesiod, or any of the most ancient writers .- Howell's History.

he was employed; the servant, before he proceeded a single step, begs of the Almighty, direction and success, and fearing lest he should lay hands on any handmaid suddenly, beseeches of God to direct him by a sign to a proper object of choice for his young master. The desired sign was, that she who, at his request, let him drink of her pitcher, should be the person appointed by God for a wife to his servant Isaac.

The faithful servant had scarcely requested, when his petition was granted; for he presently espied Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, coming from the city, with her pitcher upon her shoulder to fetch water.* Eliezer (for that was the servant's name) having observed that the damsel was fair, and carried about her every token of virginity, ran to her, after she had filled her pitcher at the well, and begged a draught of the water she had drawn.

She kindly consented, and not only gave him to drink, but went again to the well several times, and filled the trough for his camels. When he found her behaviour so exactly correspond with the sign he had requested of the Lord, he presented her with a golden ring,† and a

pair of bracelets; asking at the same time whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house to lodge him and his attendants that night.

To his great astonishment she told him, that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor by Milcah, assuring him at the same time, that there was at her father's house every necessary accommodation for him and his camels.

Eliezer, overcome with the wonderful hand of providence in his favour, and deeply affected with a sense of God's goodness, in thus directly guiding his course to the house of his master's brethren, in humble acknowledgment bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord, saying, 'Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.' While the servant was thus ruminating on, and acknowledging the wonderful interposition of divine Providence, the damsel hastened home and acquainted her friends with the extraordinary circumstance that had befallen her.

When her brother, whose name was Laban, observed the ring, and the bracelets upon her arms, and had heard what had passed at the well, he hastened thither with the utmost speed, saluted the man,

† It is the custom in almost all the East for the women to wear rings in their noses, in their left nostril, which is bored low down in the middle. These rings are of gold, and have commonly two

^{*} In our own time it is the custom for the oriental women, particularly those who are unmarried, to fetch water from the wells in the mornings and evenings; at which times they go forth adorned with their trinkets. "In the valley of Nazareth," says Dr Clarke, "appeared one of those fountains, which, from time immemorial, have been the halting place of caravans, and sometimes the scene of contention and bloodshed. The women of Nazareth were passing to and from the town, with pitchers upon their heads. We stopped to view the group of camels with their drivers who were there reposing; and calling to mind the manners of the most remote ages, we renewed the solicitations of Abraham's servant to Rebekah, by the well of Nahor." At Cana Mr Carne observed several of the women bearing stone watering-pots on their heads as they returned from the well. In Bengal, companies of four, six, ten, or more women may be seen in every town daily, going to fetch water with the pitchers resting on their sides.—Horne.

pearls and one ruby between, placed in the ring. I never saw a girl, or young woman in Arabia, or in Persia, who did not wear a ring after this manner in her nostril. It is without doubt of such a ring that we are to understand what is said in this place.—The weight of the ornaments given to Rebekah appears to us rather extraordinary: the earring, or jewel for the face, weighed half a shekel, and the bracelets for her hands ten shekels, which, as Sir J. Chardin justly observes, is about five ounces. Upon which he tells us, "the women wear rings and bracelets of as great weight as this, through all Asia, and even much heavier. They are rather manacles than bracelets. There are some as large as the finger. The women wear several of them, one above another, in such a manner as sometimes to have the arm covered with them from the wrist to the elbow. Poor people wear as many of glass or horn. They hardly ever take them off; they are their riches."—Chardin and

and invited him home, assuring him that her brother, and mother, he, with his accommodation was prepared both for him men, refreshed themselves with what they and his family. Eliezer therefore accepted the invitation, and while they were preparing the entertainment, he refused to partake of any food, till he had recounted the nature of his errand, and faithfully delivered his credentials, by telling to whom he belonged.

Having given a general account of his master's circumstances and situation, he thus proceeded: 'Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master, when she was old, and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.'

He then related a minute account of his whole journey; the manner of his meeting Rebekah, and how remarkably the hand of God had appeared in directing him thither, concluding thus: 'And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.'

The father and brother of Rebekah, finding the immediate hand of Providence giving a direct answer, referred him to Rebekah, who was then present, declaring it was God's doing; therefore said they, We ought not to say any thing to it: here is Rebekah before thee; if she consent, take her, and let her be thy master's son's wife.1 The servant having obtained the maiden's consent, offered up his grateful acknowledgment to the Lord, and having made presents to the damsel,*

had prepared for their entertainment, and went to rest.

When the family rose in the morning, he desired them to despatch him back to his master, being impatient to acquaint him with the success of his journey. The mother and brother influenced with natural affection, desired that Rebekah might be permitted to tarry with them a few days to take perhaps a last farewell; but Eliezer, like a diligent and faithful steward, would brook no delay, but was for hastening with her home; which, with the maiden's consent, he accordingly did.

Rebekah immediately prepared for her journey, being attended by her nurse Deborah,+ and her maid servants, and left her relations with this blessing: 'Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.' When Eliezer was faithfully conducting the chosen maiden to his master's house, it so fell out, that Isaac, walking in the fields to meditate on the goodness of the Lord, as demonstrated in the creation, saw his servants and camels upon the road, and went forward to meet them.

Rebekah soon espied him, and asked Eliezer who he was; and being informed that it was his master, she alighted, and veiled herself. † Isaac conducted her to his

^{*} A gold and silver sarmah, one or two set of ear-rings, bracelets, and shekels, a gold chain to hang over their breasts, with half a dozen vests, some of brocade, others of rich silk, are usually the wedding clothes of an Algerine lady of fashion. Habits and ornaments of the like kind were given to the bride in the time of Abraham. Thus 'a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight' was given to Rebekah, and 'two bracelets for her hands of

ten shekels weight of gold.' Abraham's servant also 'brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.'-Dr Shaw.

[†] Among the ancient nations nurses were always held in peculiar honour, as, so to speak, second mothers, and generally accompanied the family and fortunes of those whom they had brought up.-Patterson.

It was a part of the marriage ceremony to deliver the bride covered with a veil from head to foot; and Rebekah in this instance only followed the established custom of her country. Had it been the practice of modest women in that age to cover their faces in the presence of the other sex, she would not have needed to veil herself when her future husband met her in the field. seems to have had no veil when Abraham's servant accosted her at the well; nor, for any thing

apartment, took her to wife, and became so enamoured of her charms, that he ceased his grief for the loss of his mother, which had now continued three years.

Isaac being thus happily provided with a wife as the peculiar gift of providence, the ancient patriarch took Keturah, one of his maids, to be his concubinary wife, and by her had six sons, to each of whom he gave portions in his lifetime, and then sent them eastward, that they might not stand in competition with Isaac, who was free-born, for any part of his estate, nor settle in the land of Canaan, which the seed of Isaac was to inherit.

Isaac took Rebekah to wife when he

that can be discovered, was Rachel veiled at her first interview with Jacob; or if they did appear in veils, these prevented not a part of the face from being seen. The practice of wearing veils, except at the marriage ceremony, must, therefore, be referred to a later period, and was perhaps not introduced till after the lapse of several ages .-In modern times, the women of Syria never appear in the streets without their veils. To lift up the veil of a virgin is reckoned a gross insult; but to take away the veil of a married woman is one of the greatest indignities that she can receive, because it deprives her of the badge which distinguishes and dignifies her in that character, and betokens her alliance to her husband, and her interest in his affections. In Barbary, when the ladies appear in public, they always fold themselves up so closely in their hykes, that even without their veils, one can discover very little of their faces. But, in the summer months, when they retire to their country seats, they walk abroad with less caution; though even then, on the approach of a stranger they always drop their veils. When a lady of distinction, says Hanway, travels on horseback, she is not only veiled, but has generally a servant, who runs or rides before her, to clear the way; and on such occasions, the men, even in the market-places, always turn their backs till the women are past, it being thought the highest ill manners to look at them. A lady in the east considers herself degraded when she is exposed to the gaze of the other sex, which accounts for the conduct of Vashti in refusing to obey the command of the king. Their ideas of decency, on the other hand, forbid a virtuous woman to lay aside, or even to lift up her veil, in the presence of the other sex. She who ventures to disregard this prohibition inevitably ruins her character. From that moment she is noted as a woman of easy virtue, and her act is regarded as a signal for intrigue. - Scripture Illustrations.

mother's tent, which was allotted for her was forty years old, and lived twenty years with her before he had any issue, which he at length obtained by his importunate prayer to God; for now Rebekah conceived.

> When she felt the children struggle together within her (for she had twins) she was much startled, and inquiring of the Lord the cause, was told, 'That two nations were in her womb, and that two manner of people should be separated from her bowels; that one of those two should be stronger than the other; and the elder should serve the younger.'

> When the time of her delivery arrived, she first brought forth Esau, who was covered with red hair; then followed Jacob, whose hand held Esau's heel.

> When the boys grew up, Esau became fond of hunting; but Jacob, being of a constitution less robust, led a more confined life, and preferred his tent to the airy plain.

> As Esau's situation in life afforded him frequent opportunities of supplying his father with venison, he was esteemed before his brother; but Jacob obtained the love of his mother, being always near at hand, and ready to do her any offices of service or honour.

> When the boys arrived at the age of fifteen years, their grandfather Abraham departed this life, being one hundred and seventy-five years of age, and was buried by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, in the cave of Machpelah, in the field which he had purchased of Ephron, the prince of the Hittites, and in the very spot where Sarah his wife had been buried forty years before.

> Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, though not his heir, lived many years after the death of his father, left behind him, as was foretold, twelve sons, who were all princes of nations, and died in the hundred and seventh year of his age. Although he had been a vile man, and his hand had been against every man, and every man's hand against him, he died a natural death,

in the presence of his brethren, having his family and relations about him.*

The two sons of Isaac being grown to maturity, Esau one day having greatly fatigued himself with hunting in the field, came fainting home at the very instant

* Wherever Ishmael pitched his tent, he expected, according to a custom of great antiquity, all tents to be turned with their faces towards it, in token of submission; that the band might have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he were attacked. In this manner did Ishmael dwell, and in this manner did he die, 'in the presence,'—'before,' or, 'over against the faces of all his brethren.' The manners and customs of the Arabians, except in the article of religion, have suffered almost no alteration, during the long period of three thousand years. They have occupied the same country, and followed the same mode of life, from the days of their great ancestor, down to the present times, and range the wide extent of burning sands which separate them from all the surrounding nations, as rude, and savage, and untractable as the wild ass himself. Claiming the barren plains of Arabia as the patrimonial domain assigned by God to the founder of their nation, they consider themselves entitled to seize, and appropriate to their own use, whatever they can find there. Im-patient of restraint, and jealous of their liberty, they form no connection with the neighbouring states; they admit of little or no friendly intercourse, but live in a state of continual hostility with the rest of the world. The tent is their dwelling, and the circular camp their city; the spontaneous produce of the soil, to which they sometimes add a little patch of corn, furnishes them with means of subsistence, amply sufficient for their moderate desires; and the liberty of ranging at pleasure their interminable wilds, fully compensates in their opinion for the want of all other accommodations. Mounted on their favourite horses, they scour the waste in search of plunder, with a velocity surpassed only by the wild ass. They levy contributions on every person that hap-pens to fall in their way; and frequently rob their own countrymen, with as little ceremony as they do a stranger or an enemy: their hand is still against every man, and every man's hand against them. But they do not always confine their predatory excursions to the desert. When booty is scarce at home, they make incursions into the ter-ritories of their neighbours, and having robbed the solitary traveller, or plundered the caravan, immediately retire into the deserts far beyond the reach of their pursuers. Their character, drawn by the pen of inspiration, exactly corresponds with this view of their dispositions and conduct: 'Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work, rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yield-eth food for them and for their children.' Savage and stubborn as the wild ass which inhabits the same wilderness, they go forth on the horse or the dromedary with inconceivable swiftness, in quest of their prey. Initiated in the trade of a robber

that Jacob had prepared a mess of pottage, composed of different kinds of vegetables, and of a red colour.† Esau seeing the pottage, and his spirits standing in need of refreshment, desired his brother that he might partake of the mess, urging as a motive to persuade him into compliance, that he was very faint.

Jacob, though called a plain man, evidently on this occasion endeavours to avail himself of his brother's necessity; for, to inflame his desire the more, though greatly prompted by the keenness of his appetite, as well as render Esau fonder of the bargain by delays, he proposes to him to sell his birthright.

from their earliest years, they know no other employment; they choose it as the business of their life, and prosecute it with unwearied activity. They start before the dawn, to invade the village or the caravan; make their attack with desperate courage, and surprising rapidity; and, plunging instantly into the desert, escape from the vengeance of their enemies. Provoked by their continual insults, the nations of ancient and modern times have often invaded their country with powerful armies, determined to extirpate, or at least to subdue them to their yoke; but they always returned baffled and disappointed. The savage freebooters, disdaining every idea of submission, with invincible patience and resolution, maintained their independence; and they have transmitted it unimpaired to the present times. In spite of all their enemies can do to restrain them, they continue to dwell in the presence of all their brethren, and to assert their right to insult and plunder every one they meet with on the borders, or within the limits of their domains .- Paxton.

+ Lentils were a kind of pulse, somewhat like our vetches, or coarser sort of pease. St Austin says that these were Egyptian lentils, which were in great esteem, and very probably gave the pottage a red tincture. Some imagine that Esau did not know what this lentil-soup was, and therefore he only called it by its colour, 'Give me of that red, that same red;' as it is in the Hebrew, for which reason he was likewise called Edom, which signifies red: but there is no occasion to suppose that he was ignorant of what lentils were, only his repeating the word red, without adding the name of a thing, denoted his great hunger, and eagerness of appetite, which was probably still more irritated by the colour of the soup. Biblioth. Bib.

—The inhabitants of Barbary still make use of lentils, boiled and stewed with oil and garlic, and forming a pottage of a chocolate colour.

† Birthright or primogeniture had many and great privileges annexed to it. The first-born was consecrated to the Lord, Exod. xxii. 29; was next in honour and dignity to the parents, Gen. xlix. 3 had a double portion allotted him, Deut. xxi.

Esau, who was bent upon his pottage, considered not at that time the great and manifold advantages of his birthright, and, consulting his appetite rather than his reason, answers in a sanguine, though faint manner, 'Behold, I am at the point to die, and what shall this birthright do to me?'

Jacob finding him come to this pass, would not part with his pottage till he had forced Esau to assign over to him his birthright by an oath.

Thus needy Esau, without hesitation, sold his birthright, with all its appertaining benefits, for a simple mess of pottage, which action the sacred historian calls despising his birthright, Gen. xxv. 34.

CHAPTER VI.

Isaac removes from Beer-sheba to Gerar.— Enters into a covenant with Abimelech.— Jacob obtains the blessing from his father, instead of Esau.—Flees from his brother's revenge at the advice of Rebekah his mother.

Isaac took up his abode at Beer-sheba, the residence of his father Abraham, till a famine which happened in that country obliged him to remove.

While he was ruminating with himself which way to proceed, the Lord in a vision charged him by no means to go into Egypt, but pursue the divine direction, assuring him on those terms of his peculiar favour and blessing, and that in his descendants he would punctually fulfil the oath he had sworn to his father Abraham, by causing his family to increase and multiply, and making them the instruments of conveying the most important good to mankind.

According to God's command, Isaac directed his course to the country of the Philistines, and fixed his habitation in Gerar, whither on his arrival he used the same stratagem as his father had done in

17; succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom, 2 Chron. xxi. 3; and therefore was a matter of the highest moment.

Egypt, and from the same motive; for, fearing that the charms of his wife Rebekah might captivate the men of that country, and thereby endanger his safety, he caused her to pass for his sister, a title very common in those days among kindred of every degree. But the disguise was soon detected, for Abimelech* (that is, the king) had observed such freedoms between them, as inclined him to think there could be no other connection than that of man and wife. He therefore sent for Isaac, and severely reprimanded him for endeavouring to impose upon the people, confidently averring from what he had seen that she was his wife.

Isaac thus convicted, attempted not to disprove the charge, but urged in vindication of his conduct, that he did it to save his life: nevertheless the king blamed him for laying a temptation before him and his people, saying, 'What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lain with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.' He then gave the strictest charge to his people in general, to avoid giving the least offence either to him or to his wife.

Having received these tokens of the royal sanction and patronage, Isaac applied himself to husbandry, in which it pleased God to render him remarkably successful; insomuch that in process of time he became so wealthy and powerful as to excite the envy of the principal inhabitants of Gerar. The success of Isaac however was soon the cause of his departure; for the king's attendants and favourites, in order to give him offence, ordered the wells to be filled up, that his father's servants had

^{*} It is not unlikely that this Abimelech might be the son of that Abimelech, king of Gerar, with whom Abraham had formerly made a covenant, supposing Abimelech to be here the proper name of a man: but it is much more probable, that, at this time, it was a common name for the kings of the Philistines, as Cæsar was for the Roman emperors, and Pharaoh for the kings of Egypt.—Stackhouse.

digged; which, together with the advice of Disapproving a situation amongst such names as his father had given them. In fruitful in the land.' the course of their labour, the servants discovered a new well of fine springing water; but a dispute arising between some than springs. Dr Richardson saw one of these neighbouring herdsmen and Isaac's peoupon their ground; the latter at the command of their master quitted it; but called it Esek, or Contention, to perpetuate the quarrel which was occasioned by its discovery. Isaac's servants then digged another well, which also excited conten-

tion, and was therefore called Sitnah, or

Hatred.*

* "Strife," says Dr Richardson, "between the different villagers and the different herdsmen here, exists still, as it did in the days of Abraham and Lot: the country has often changed masters; but the habits of the natives, both in this and other respects, have been nearly stationary."—The extreme scarcity of water in these arid regions accounts for the fierce contentions about the possession of a well, which so frequently happened between the shepherds of different masters. But after the question of right, or of possession, was decided, it would seem the shepherds were often detected in fraudulently watering their flocks and herds from their neighbour's well. To prevent this, they secured the cover with a lock, which continued in use so late as the days of Chardin, who frequently saw such precautions used in different parts of Asia, on account of the real scarcity of water there. According to that intelli-gent traveller, when the wells and cisterns were not locked up, some person was so far the proprietor, that no one dared to open a well, or a cistern, but in his presence. Some of these wells are furnished with troughs and flights of steps down to the water, and other contrivances, to facilitate the labour of watering the cattle. In modern times, Mr Park found a trough near the well, from which the Moors watered their cattle, in the sandy deserts of Sahara. As the wells are often very deep, from an hundred and sixty to an hundred and seventy feet, the water is drawn up with small leathern buckets, and a cord, which travellers are often

the king, who was not free from jealousy contentious and envious people, the paon his account, determined him to with- triarch removed from amongst them, and draw to some other place. To avoid digged another well, of which he kept every cause of suspicion in the king, as peaceable possession, and therefore called well as secure his property, Isaac withdrew it Rehoboth, or free space, because his to the valley of Gerar, and immediately flock had now room to feed at large, and employed his servants in digging the wells range the country in search of the best which the Philistines had filled up; and pasture: 'for now,' said he, 'the Lord when finished, called them by the same hath made room for us, and we shall be

But Isaac dwelt not long upon this

buckets lying beside a deep well near a Christian church in Egypt to draw water for the congregaple, the former claiming the well as found tion. And Buckingham found a party of twelve or fifteen Arabs drawing water in leathern buckets by cords and pulleys. The scarcity of water, and the great labour and expense of digging away so much earth, in order to reach it, render a well extremely valuable. As the water is often sold at a very high price, a number of good wells yield to the proprietor a large revenue. Pitts was obliged to purchase water at sixpence a gallon. To stop the wells, is therefore justly reckoned an act of hostility. This mode of taking vengeance on enemies has been practised in more recent times. The Turkish emperors give annually to every Arab tribe near the road, by which the Mahomedan pil-grims travel to Mecca, a certain sum of money, and a certain number of vestments, to keep them from destroying the wells, which lie on that route and to escort the pilgrims across their country. D'Herbelot records an incident exactly in point, which seems to be quite common among the Arabs. Gianabi, a famous rebel in the tenth century, gathered a number of people together, seized on Bassorah, and Caufa; and afterwards insulted the reigning caliph, by presenting himself boldly before Bagdat, his capital; after which he retired by little and little, filling up all the pits with sand, which had been dug on the road to Mecca, for the benefit of the pilgrims. Near the fountains and wells, the robber and assassin commonly took his station, and in time of war the enemy placed their ambush, because the flocks and herds in which the wealth of the country chiefly consisted, were twice every day collected to those places, and might be seized with less danger when the shepherds were busily engaged in drawing water. circumstance, which must have been familiar to the inhabitants of those countries, is mentioned by Deborah in her triumphal song: 'They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the place of the drawing of water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord.' But a still more perfect comment on these words is furnished by an historian of the croisades, who complains, that during the siege of Jerusalem by the Christian armies, numbers of their men were daily cut off, and their cattle driven away by the Saracens, who lay obliged to carry along with them, in their journey, in ambush for this purpose near all the fountains because they meet with more cisterns and wells and watering places.—Paston.

spot: for he soon returned to Beer-sheba, where, on the very night of his arrival, it pleased God to renew the promise he had made to him and his seed for the sake of faithful Abraham; in grateful acknowledgment of which repeated instance of the divine goodness, he built an altar there, called upon the name of the Lord, and determining with God's blessing to tarry there some time, ordered his servants to dig a well,-water in those dry and hot countries being a very valuable commodity. Isaac had not long resided here, before Abimelech, touched with a sense of the injury he had done him, and the unworthy treatment he had received from his servants, as well as fearing his just and powerful resentment, thought it most prudent to avoid future trouble, by endeavouring to bring him into a league of friendship with him; taking therefore with him two of his chief friends and subjects, he went to Isaac to Beer-sheba, in order to pay him respect and honour.

To remind the king that he still retained a sense of the injuries he had formerly one him, the patriarch received his visit ut coolly, demanding of him the cause of visiting a person to whom by his conduct and behaviour he had long discovered an aversion.

Abimelech, conscious of his error, and desirous of avoiding the resentment of the patriarch, told him, that the cause of desiring to be on terms of friendship with him, arose from a certain assurance, that the Lord had undertaken to assert his right; assuring him at the same time, that he had retained an esteem for him, and concluding his address with a very honourable appellation, 'Thou art now the blessed of the Lord.

Isaac being of a peaceable disposition, entertained Abimelech and his attendants with great liberality; and the ensuing morning, the king and the patriarch entered into a covenant of friendship, ratified the same by a solemn and mutual oath, and they parted from each other with much

peace and respect. Isaac had no sooner dismissed Abimelech than his servant came and informed him that they had found water, upon which he called it Sheba.

A circumstance now happened which sorely grieved the patriarch and his wife Rebekah: Esau, who had long discovered a perverse and obstinate temper, at the age of forty years took two wives, Judith and Bashemath, from among the daughters of the Hittites; though he could not but be sensible of the caution his pious grandfather always took to prevent his father from marrying into that idolatrous family: yet such was the power of natural affection with Isaac, that swayed by an over-fondness for a disobedient and rebellious son, he would have preferred the order of nature to the will of God, who had expressly declared, before Esau and Jacob were born, that the elder should serve the younger; but providence disappointed his purposes, in order to promote its own wise and gracious designs.

Being now an hundred and thirty-seven years old, he called to him his son Esau, for whom he always entertained a partial regard, and reminding him of his advanced years, and the uncertainty of his life, desired him to take his bow and quiver, kill some venison, and make him savoury meat, that his spirits might he refreshed, and his mind properly disposed for giving him that solemn blessing, which pious parents in those days always bestowed upon their children, and which was held sacred as a presage of their future prosperity.*

^{*} The supper of savoury meat, as we call it (Gen. xxvii. 4.), to be caught by hunting, was intended plainly for a festival or a sacrifice; and upon the prayers that were frequent at sacrifices, Isaac expected, as was then usual in such eminent cases, that a divine impulse would come upon him, in order to the solemn blessing of his son there present, and his foretelling his future behaviour and fortune. Whence it must be, that when Isaac had unwittingly blessed Jacob, and was afterwards made sensible of his mistake, yet did he not at-tempt to alter it, how earnestly soever his affection for Esau might incline him to wish it might be altered, because he knew that this blessing came not from himself, but from God, and that an alter-

Rebekah overheard what had passed between Esau and his father, who, she well knew, preferred him to Isaac; and determined if possible to deprive him of the intended blessing, and by stratagem cause it to be pronounced on her youngest son. To effect this she called Jacob, acquainted him with the design of his father to pronounce his solemn blessing on his brother, and having enjoined him to a punctual obedience to whatever she should command, bade him go immediately to the flock, and fetch from thence two kids of the goats, and with them, said she, 'I will make savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth; and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.'

The upright youth hesitates to comply with his mother's injunction, lest his father should detect his design, and instead of a blessing, should pronounce upon him a curse. His reluctance was increased by this additional reflection, that as Esau was remarkably hairy, and he remarkably smooth, his father, to supply the defect of sight, might handle him, and thereby discover the cheat: he therefore mentioned this circumstance as a farther ground of objection; but his mother, determined on her purposes, takes upon herself whatever might result from the same, 'Upon me be thy curse, my son, only obey my voice and go fetch me them.'*

ation was out of his power. A second afflatus then came upon him, and enabled him to foretell Esau's future behaviour and fortune also.—Whis-

At length assured of his mother's extraordinary affection for him, he delayed not, but went immediately and brought the kids, of which his mother made savoury meat, such as she knew her husband loved. The food thus prepared, she put upon Jacob Esau's best attire, and covered his hands and neck with the skins of the kids, and presenting him with the savoury meat, sent him with it to his father Isaac. soon as he entered, the good old man inquired of him who he was? Jacob replied, 'I am Esau thy first-born ;+ I have punctually obeyed your command; arise, and. eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. The old man, surprised at the haste with which his desire was executed, inquired of him how it came to pass that he found the venison so quickly? Jacob replied, 'Because the Lord brought it tome;' but Isaac, still diffident of his person, desired him to approach, that he might feel and thereby be assured whether or not he was really and verily his son Esau.

Jacob accordingly came near, and his aged father, when he had felt his hands, which were covered with the skin of a kid, could not determine whether it was Esau or Jacob, discovering his doubt in these words, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' At length, however, being obliged to rely on the veracity of his son, he put the question to him more strongly; 'Art thou my very son Esau?' Jacob answered as falsely as readily, 'I am;' and the good old man being now satisfied that he was indeed his son Esau, bid him bring the venison, that he might eat thereof, and bless him.t

writings in which the very blemishes and transgressions of those who make the greatest figure therein, are recorded for our instruction.

^{*} Rebekah seems to have been persuaded, that Jacob had a just title to the first blessing, which Esau had sold with his birthright, and which God had designed for Jacob from the beginning; whence she thought it her duty to deceive Isaac into an action which he ought to have done voluntarily, and therefore takes the whole curse upon herself, provided Isaac should discover the fallacy. But though these circumstances have a great tendency to palliate the guilt both of Jacob and his mother, yet they are not sufficient to excuse them, the former having increased his crime by affirming an absolute lie, 'I am Esau thy first-born,' &c. We should upon the whole lament the frailty of human nature, which is ever liable to err, and at the same time admire the impartiality of the sacred

[†] Some commentators suppose that Jacob meant, that he represented or stood in the place of Esau the first-born, by virtue of the purchase he had made of the primogeniture or birthright of his brother. But this is offered as mere opinion.

[‡] Here was nothing but counterfeiting; a feigned person, a feigned name, feigned venison, a feigned answer, and yet behold a true blessing; but to the man, not to the means. Those were so unsound,

The savoury meat was accordingly brought, and Isaac having eaten thereof, and drank of the wine, with which his son furnished him, called him to come near and kiss him, which when Jacob had done, he blessed him in these words: 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew* of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.' Jacob had no sooner received the blessing from his father, and was gone from his presence, than Esau came in, bringing the venison prepared for him to eat, and saying, 'Let my father arise and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.' Isaac, confounded at the circumstance, hastily asked who he was? and when Esau replied, that he was his son, even his firstborn Esau, he was seized with a sudden trembling, and with astonished countenance, asked, 'who and where was he,' that had brought venison in to him, of

which he had eaten before he came, and blessed him; and to give a farther sanction to the transaction, he added, 'yea, and he shall be blessed.' When the disappointed Esau heard these words of his father, he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father.' His father in excuse told him, that his brother by a stratagem had got the blessing from him.

Esau then remonstrated on the injustice

Esau then remonstrated on the injustice of the proceeding, having first taken away his birthright, and then the blessing of his father; but pathetically asked, if he had not in reserve a blessing for him; repeating the importunate request, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father,' and wept most bitterly.

The good old man, moved with compassion for his unhappy son, in order to appease his troubled mind a little, said to him, 'Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.' † But this

that Jacob himself doth more fear their curse, than hope for their success. Isaac was now both simple and old; yet, if he had perceived the fraud, Jacob had been more sure of a curse, than he could be sure that he should not be perceived. Rebekah, presuming upon the oracle of God and her husband's simplicity, dare be his surety for the danger, his counsellor for the carriage of the business, his cook for the diet, yea, dresses both the meat and the man; and now puts words into his mouth, the dish into his hand, the garments upon his back, the goat's hair upon the open parts of his body, and sends him in thus furnished for the blessing, standing, no doubt, at the door, to see how well her device succeeded. And if old Isaac should; by any of his senses, have discerned the guile, she had soon stepped in and undertaken the blame, and urged him with that known will of God concerning Jacob's dominion, and Esau's servitude, which either age or affection had made him forget.—Hall.

* In those hot countries, showers being less frequent than with us, the morning and evening dews were of the utmost importance to refresh the earth, and produce that plenty for which the country was so remarkable.

[†] The Edomites, or Idumæans, who were the posterity of Esau, for a considerable time were a people of much more power and authority than the Israelites, till in the days of David they were entirely conquered, 2 Sam. viii. 14; they were thereupon governed by deputies or viceroys, appointed by the kings of Judah; and whenever they attempted to rebel, were for a long time crushed, and kept under by the Jews. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they expelled their viceroy, and set up a king of their own, 2 Kings viii. 20; and though they were reduced at that time, yet for some generations after this they seemed to have lived independent on the Jews, and when the Babylonians invaded Judea, they not only took part with them, but violently oppressed them, even when the enemy was withdrawn, so that remembering what they had suffered under Joab, in the days of David, they entered into the like cruel measures against the Jews, and threatened to lay Jerusalem level with the ground. Their animosity against the posterity of Jacob seems indeed to be hereditary; nor did they ever cease, for any considerable time, from broils and contentions, until they were conquered by Hircanus, and reduced to the necessity of embracing the Jewish religion, or quitting their country: hereupon consenting to the former they were incorporated with the

address availed not, for Esau conceived a most implacable hatred against his brother Jacob, for depriving him of the important blessing, and determined as soon as his father should die, to slay him.

Rebekah being informed of Esau's desperate resolution on the life of her beloved Jacob, acquainted him with the horrid design, and advised him to betake him hastily to her brother Laban at Haran, and there remain till his brother's fury might be somewhat abated, assuring him that she would particularly observe the same, and send him word when he might return with safety. Jacob, who ever listened to, and obeyed the counsel of his mother, was ready to comply with her proposal, but was not willing to depart before he had obtained his father's consent, which in this case he much doubted of effecting. remove this difficulty therefore, Rebekah artfully complained of the concern under which she laboured on account of Esau's taking wives from among the daughters of the Hittites, insinuating her fear lest Jacob should follow his example. Though Isaac understood not the drift of this complaint, yet being a pious man, and knowing that the promise made to his father Abraham, and renewed to him, was to be fulfilled in Jacob's issue; and being very anxious that he might not corrupt his blood by intermarrying with idolaters, whom God would destroy, called Jacob to him, and with his blessing laid on him a most solemn injunction, that he should not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, his mother's father, and take from them a wife of the daughters of Laban his mother's brother; and farther to encourage him, pronounces his blessing, 'God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the

blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.' Isaac then sent away his son Jacob, and he went to Padan-aram, unto Laban, according to his father's directions.

CHAPTER VII.

Jacob's vision and vow.—Jacob is entertained by Laoan—Covenanteth for Rachel; is deceived with Leah, but at length marries Rachel also.

—Rachel is concerned on account of her barrenness, and at length blessed with a son, whom she called Joseph.—Jacob enters into a new covenant with Laban; by a scheme becomes very rich.—Departs from Laban, is pursued and taken; enters into a fresh covenant with Laban.

THE disappointed Esau finding that his father had again blessed his brother Jacob, and despatched him to Padan-aram, with the most solemn injunction not to marry with any of the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob, in obedience to his father's command, was departed, could not but reflect on his own conduct in taking those Hittite wives. To reinstate himself therefore, if possible, in the favour of his father, he went and took to wife Mahalath, his uncle Ishmael's daughter; but this produced not the desired effect.

Jacob departing from Beer-sheba, proceeded towards Haran; but night overtaking him, he took up his lodging in the open air,* having the sky for his covering, and stones for his pillow. While he slept, he dreamed, that he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Above this ladder stood the Lord, who thus bespoke him: 'I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to

Jews, and became one nation, so that, in the first century after Christ, the name of Idumean was lost, and quite disused.—Le Clerc's Commentary.

^{*} So exact was Jacob in observing the command of his father, that he would not enter any house that belonged to a Canaanite, but chose rather to sleep in the open air

thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

Jacob was so affected with this dream, that when he awoke he exclaimed; 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.'*

As this is the first account in sacred history of God's immediately appearing to Jacob, there is reason to think it was the first time; for we find it struck him with a religious awe, and he said, in a holy rapture: 'How dreadful is this place! This is the house of God, the gate of heaven.'

When Jacob arose from his airy couch, he took the chief stone upon which he had lain his head, and set it up as a monument of God's loving-kindness towards him, in confirming so solemnly the promises made to his fathers; and as a mark to distinguish the very spot, to those who might travel that way.

Having set up the stone, he poured oil upon it,† and, in token of so remarkable a display of divine love, changed the name of the place from Luz to Bethel.‡

* We are by no means to infer from this exclamation, that Jacob had such contracted notions of the omnipresent Jehovah, as to imagine that he was not present throughout, yea, beyond all space. The meaning therefore is plainly this, that he could not have imagined before, that the Lord would have chosen that spot to manifest his peculiar and glorious presence. This sense is confirmed by several of the ancient versions, and particularly the Chaldee.

† We find from several ancient writers that this ceremony was used in consecrating things to a divine use; and that among the heathens every stone that had received this rite was esteemed as divine and honoured with adoration.

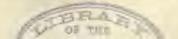
† The place where Jacob took up his lodging was near Luz, which signifies an almond, and might very likely have its name from the many groves of almond-trees which were thereabouts; and under some of which, it is not unlikely that Jacob might take up his lodging, because the largeness of their leaves, in that country, would afford no incommodious shelter from the weather. Jacob, upon the account of the vision, which he had in this place, called it Bethel; and the Israel-

Before he departed from this memorable spot, he repeated in a most solemn manner part of the divine promise; and in order to bind himself more strongly to the service of God, made a vow, saying to this purport, 'If God will be with me, and direct me in my journey, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I return to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set up as a pillar, § shall be God's house: and of all

ites, when they conquered Canaan, in remembrance of the same, continued the name. It lay to the west of Hai, about eight miles to the north of Jerusalem, in the confines of the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin. So that, upon the revolt of the ten tribes, it belonged to the kingdom of Israel, and was therefore one of the cities where Jeroboam set up his golden calves, whence the prophet Hosea (Chap. iv. 15.) alluding to the name given it by Jacob, calls it Beth-aven, instead of Bethel, that is, the 'house of vanity or idols,' instead of 'the house of God,'—Patrick's Commentary and

Wells's Geography.

of The Baithylia or consecrated stones, adored by the early Phænicians, are supposed to have been the most ancient objects of idolatrous worship; and, probably, were afterwards formed into beautiful statues, when the art of sculpture became tolerably perfected. They originated in Jacob's setting up and anointing with oil the stone which he had used for a pillow, as a memorial of the heavenly vision with which he had been favoured (Gen. xxviii. 18.), and also to serve as a token to point out to him the place when God should bring him back again. The practice of setting up stones as a guide to travellers still exists in Persia and other parts of the East. In the course of Mr Morier's journey in the interior of that country, he remarked that his old guide "every here and there placed a stone on a conspicuous bit of rock, or two stones one upon the other, at the same time uttering some words which" (says this intelligent traveller) "I learnt were a prayer for our safe return. This explained to me, what I had frequently seen before in the East, and particularly on a high road leading to a great town, whence the town is first seen, and where the eastern traveller sets up his stone, accompanied by a devout exclamation, as it were, in token of his safe arrival. The action of our guide appears to illustrate the vow which Jacob made when he travelled to Padan-aram. (Gen. xxviii. 18—22.) In seeing a stone on the road placed in this position, or one stone upon another, it implies that some traveller has there made a vow or a thanksgiving. Nothing is so natural in a journey over a dreary country, as for a solitary traveller to sit down, fatigued, and to make the vow that Jacob did :-- 'If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I reach my father's house in peace,' &c. then I will



that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.'

The pious traveller having performed a solemn vow unto the Lord, proceeded on his journey, till he came to the well of Haran, near which lay several flocks of sheep. He then inquired of the shepherds, if they knew Laban, the son of Nahor? and was informed they did; and that Rachel his daughter approached with her flock, to water at the well.

During his discourse with the shepherds, the damsel arrived with her fleecy care, and Jacob, as a token of respect, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep in her stead; which done, he kissed her, wept for joy, and told her who he was.

Rachel left Jacob at the well, and hastened to acquaint her father with what had happened. The good old man, over-joyed at the arrival of his sister's son, ran but to meet him, and having most cordially embraced him, conducted him to his house.

On their arrival at Laban's house, Jacob recounted the occasion of his coming from home, and some of the incidents that happened in the way, insomuch that his uncle was convinced he left not his parents for any misdemeanor on his part, but in strict obedience to their will and pleasure, though he travelled without any attendants.

Laban, finding from his account that he was under the immediate care and protection of Providence, acknowledged him as his near relative, and kindly entertained him; but Jacob, unaccustomed to an inactive life, entered himself in the business of his occupation, which when Laban had observed, he acquainted him that he by no means desired his service for nought, and insisted on his mentioning his own terms.

give so much in charity:—or, again, that on first seeing the place which he has so long toiled to reach, the traveller should sit down and make a thanksgiving; in both cases setting up a stone as a memorial."—Horne. Rachel, the beautiful and virtuous shepherdess,* had already captivated his heart, and he proposed her as the reward of seven years' service.† Laban immediately consented to the proposal, and Jacob en-

* This innocent and useful employ, in those early ages, was reputed no disgrace; the greatest heroes of antiquity, the sons of kings, and kings themselves are represented as engaged in the same, which was then as honourable as it is now despicable.

† In the remote ages of antiquity, women were literally purchased by their husbands; and the presents made to their parents or other relations were called their dowry. Thus, we find Shechem bargaining with Jacob and his sons for Dinah: " Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give: ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife." The practice still continues in the country of Shechem; for when a young Arab wishes to marry, he must purchase his wife; and for this reason, fathers, among the Arabs, are never more happy than when they have many daughters. They are reckoned the principal riches of a house. An Arabian suitor will offer fifty sheep, six camels, or a dozen of cows; if he be not rich enough to make such offers, he proposes to give a mare or a colt; considering in the offer, the merit of the young woman, the rank of her family, and his own circumstances. In the primitive times of Greece, a well-educated lady was valued at four oxen. When they are agreed on both sides, the contract is drawn up by him that acts as cadi or judge among these Arabs. When the intended husband was not able to give a dowry, he offered an equivalent,-as exemplified above in the case of Jacob serving Laban seven years for his daughter Rachel. This custom has descended to modern times; for in Cabul the young men who are unable to advance the required dowry, "live with their future father-in-law and earn their bride by their services, without ever seeing the object of their wishes." Saul, instead of a dowry, required David to bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, under the pretence of avenging himself of his enemies. This custom has prevailed in latter times; for in some countries they give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men, or those who should bring them so many heads of the people with whom they happen to be at war. It is recorded of a nation in Caramania, that no man among them was permitted to marry, till he had first brought the head of an enemy to the king. Aristotle admits, that the ancient Grecians were accustomed to buy their wives; but they no sooner began to lay aside their barbarous manners, than this disgusting practice ceased, and the custom of giving portions to their sons in-law, was substituted in its place. The Romans also, in the first ages of their history, purchased their wives; but afterwards they required the wife to bring a portion to the husband, that he might be able to bear the charges of the matrimonial state more easily .- Paxton.

t ed on his service most cheerfully, having an eye to the reward, which in his judgeven conceived. The fruitfulness of her ment was inestimable.

His affection for Rachel sweetened the servitude, as well as rendered the time apparently short; and when it was expired, Jacob demanded Rachel to wife. Laban, on the occasion, invited all his friends and neighbours to the solemnization of the nuptials; but, desirous of retaining Jacob in his service, he treated him very unfairly; for in the evening he took Leah, his other daughter, and brought her to Jacob's bed,* instead of Rachel, to whom he was contracted.

When Jacob discovered the deceit in the morning,+ he expostulated with Laban on the injustice of his treatment; but his uncle waved the affair, by observing, that it was not the custom of the country, to give the younger in marriage before the elder.‡ Though this excuse was so trifling, Laban, who had observed Jacob's fondness for Rachel, knew he could bring him to any terms, and therefore demanded the same course of service for his younger daughter; and as he had the utmost reason to apprehend that Jacob in resentment of the fraud would discard Leah, he entreated him to fulfil her week, promising on those terms, to give him her also in marriage. Jacob complied with the proposal, and then married Rachel, of whom being passionately fond he slighted Leah. But God compassionating the case of Leah, opened her womb, and restrained Rachel from child-bearing, insomuch that the

former bare four sons before the latter even conceived. The fruitfulness of her sister excited the envy of Rachel, who in process of time broke off all family connection and became averse to the very sight of Leah.

Such was her concern for her barrenness that it bewildered her imagination, and in very opprobrious terms she vented her rage upon her husband; 'Give me children, or else I die:' but Jacob checked such an inordinate sally of temper in a manner becoming a person of prudence and piety, in this short, though stinging reproof, 'Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?'

Rachel, thus convinced of her folly and rashness, proposed a method to supply this defect in herself; this was the stratagem pursued by her grandmother Sarah, for having advised concerning the matter with her husband, she gave him her handmaid Bilhah as a concubinary wife, thinking to esteem and cherish as her own, the children which Jacob might have by her maid. Rachel therefore, according to her design, when Bilhah bore Jacob a son, claimed him as her own, and called him Dan, as she did also a second, whom she named Naphtali.

But this artifice of Rachel to secure her husband's love was counteracted by Leah, who likewise gave one of her maids to Jacob; and when she bore him a son, called his name Gad, or a troop, as she did a second, Asher, or blessed. By this time Reuben, Leah's eldest son by Jacob, was arrived at years sufficient to be trusted by himself, and wandering one day in the fields, he found some extraordinary flowers, § which he brought home and presented to his mother.

^{*} It was customary in that country, for the bride, as an emblem of modesty, to be covered with a veil when she was brought to the bridegroom: by this means doubtless Jacob was imposed on by Laban, and could not discern that it was Leah, till the next morning.

[†] It is not a little remarkable, that Jacob, who deprived Esau of the blessing his father intended him by fraud, lost what he esteemed an invaluable blessing, by fraud likewise.

[‡] The same practice continues to this day among the Hindoos, with whom it is considered criminal to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder, or for a younger son to marry while his elder brother remains unmarried.

If the word dudaim, which we render mandrakes, is one of those terms whose true signification the Jews, at this time, pretend not to understand. There is but one place more in scripture, wherein it occurs, and that is in the 7th chapter of Canticles, wherein the bridegroom invites his spouse to go with him into the fields: 'Come, my beloved, let us get up early to the vineyards, let us

Rachel was captivated with the sight of them, and desired her sister to give her part; but Leah, likewise envying Rachel from a suspicion that she shared too largely in her husband's affection, churlishly answered her request; 'Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband, but you must take my son's flowers too?' Rachel having a peculiar inclination to the flowers, waved all harsh reply, and endeavouring to win her over to her will, by mild and gentle measures, proposed, if she would give her some of the flowers, that she should enjoy her husband's company that night,

see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grapes appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. The mandrakes give a smell; at our gates are all manner of fruits, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.' Here we find it placed among the most delicious and pleasant fruits, the grape, the pomegranate, &c. and represented as very fragrant and odoriferous in its smell; but the mandrake, say some, is a stinking and ill-scented fruit, of a bad taste, and a cold narcotic quality; and therefore they have rendered the word fine and lovely flowers; and some of them will have it to be the violet or jessamine, which suit very well with the season of the year here mentioned, whilst others contend very strongly for the lily, which, in Syria, grew in the fields, and was of a most agreeable beauty and smell. That passage in Solomon's song, however, will not suffer us to doubt but that it was a fruit of some kind or other; and Ludolff, in his history of Ethiopia, will needs have it to be what the Syrians call mauz, a fruit much about as big as a small cucumber, that hangs in clusters, sometimes to the number of forty upon the same stalk, and is in figure and taste not unlike the Indian fig. It is not to be doubted indeed, but that the mandrake in Palestine is of a different kind to what we have in these climates. St Austin, who thought it a great curiosity to see one, tells us, that it was very beautiful to the eye, and of a fragrant smell, but utterly insipid; so that he wonders what should make Rachel set so high a value upon it, unless it were its scarceness and rich scent. In the province of Pekin in China, we are informed, that there is a kind of mandrake so valuable, and, when mixed in any liquor, makes so rich a cordial, that a pound of its root is worth thrice its weight in silver.

It was a general opinion among the ancients, that there was a certain quality in the juice of mandrakes to excite amorous inclinations, and therefore they call them the apples of love, as the Hebrew word dod, from whence comes dodaim, is frequently set to signify love. Thus, whether we consider this fruit as pleasant to the eye, smell, or taste, or as a restorative to nature, and helpful to conception, any of these reasons are sufficient why Rachel should take such a fancy to them.—Stackhouse.

Rachel was captivated with the sight of though in the course of things he was then em, and desired her sister to give her to be the consort of Rachel.

Leah approved of the proposal, and the agreement was accordingly made; but to make sure of the bargain, she sent out to meet Jacob on his return from the field, and having told him the contract between herself and Rachel, enjoyed his company that night. Though he now thought she was past child-bearing, she conceived once more, and brought forth her fifth son, whom he called Issachar, because he was the product of her hire.

Leah conceived again, and bare a sixth son, whom she called Zebulun; and at length she bare to Jacob the only daugh ter of whom we read, whose name was Dinah.

Rachel had long lamented in bitterness of soul her want of issue; but at length it pleased God, in his infinite goodness, to hearken to her petition, grant her earnest desire, and bless her with a son. Rejoicing that God had taken away her reproach,* and foretelling, that the Lord would bestow on her another son, she called her first-born Joseph.

Soon after the birth of Joseph, the appointed time of Jacob's servitude being expired, he began to grow desirous of returning to his own country; and therefore reminding Laban that he had fulfilled his contract, he desired him to deliver his wives and children, for whom he had served him, that he might go to the habitation of his father.

Laban, sensible of the vast importance of Jacob's continuance with him, endeavoured to divert him from all desire of leaving him, by assuring him, that since he was with him, he had received many peculiar tokens of the divine blessing; and offering him whatever terms he should propose. But all his endeavours to keep Jacob in his service were in vain;

^{*} As fruitfulness was then accounted a great blessing from that God, who said, 'Increase and multiply,' so barrenness was accounted a reproach or curse.

he well knew, nor failed to tell him, that through the blessing of God on his honest and faithful labours, he had increased his little herd to a multitude; reminding him, at the same time, that it was absolutely necessary he should act for himself, and make provision for his own family, which was become numerous.

Laban, still desirous of retaining him, pressed him hard, and once more offered him his own terms.

Jacob would accept of no stated wages, but proposed these conditions: that they should pass through the whole flock of sheep and goats, and having separated all the speckled cattle from the white, the former should be committed to the care of Laban's sons, and the latter to the care of Jacob; then whatsoever spotted or brown cattle should be produced out of the white flock, which he was to keep, should be his wages.

Laban immediately consented to the proposal; the flocks were accordingly separated; and the spotted cattle were delivered into the custody of Laban, while the rest were committed to the care of Jacob; and, to prevent any intercourse between them, they were set three days journey apart.

The flocks being thus separated and committed to the care of their respective keepers, Jacob, by the assistance of the Divine wisdom, pursued a very extraordinary method to improve his own stock and at the same time to lessen that of Laban. He took rods or twigs of the green poplar, hazel, and chestnut trees, and stripping off part of the rinds in strakes, caused some of the white to appear on the twigs: these twigs he placed in the watering troughs, when the cattle came to drink, at the time in which they usually engender; that seeing the speckled twigs they might conceive, and bring forth speckled cattle. He also took particular care to place the twigs before the fattest and most healthy cattle; and also to avoid putting any before those that

were weak and sickly, by which wise procedure he not only obtained for himself the greater number, but the choicest and most valuable.*

Thus, in a short time, through the blessing of God, Jacob became exceedingly rich and powerful; but the extraordinary increase of his property exposed him to the envy of Laban's sons, and even of Laban himself, insomuch that they were continually murmuring against him, because he had raised himself to a good estate out of their fortunes.

Jacob having observed Laban's coolness and indifference towards him, began to think of leaving him, and return to his father's house, which design he was shortly commanded by God, in a vision, to put into execution.

He therefore sent to his wives in the field, where he kept his flock, in order to consult with them, and gain their consent to go with him. When they came, he laid before them the whole of his purpose, telling them, he observed their father of late had treated him with great coolness and indifference, and even sometimes with marks of displeasure, though he knew no just cause for such behaviour. He also took occasion to appeal to them concerning his industry and fidelity, and the injustice of their father towards him, first,

[.] The method Jacob used, by peeling rods, and placing them before the cattle in coupling time, has given rise to various opinions and warm disputes. It has been said, that this was a natural means, sufficient to produce the effects noticed. Aristotle, Pliny, and others have been cited, to prove, that impressions made on the imagination of the dam at the time of conception, may have a powerful influence on the shape and colour of the young. Admitting this, is it supposable that Jacob possessed a secret unknown to others? The opinion of Shuckford seems to me the most rational. He supposes that God, who had seen the injustice of Laban, determined to punish him and to reward Jacob, and that as he appeared to Jacob in a dream, and showed him the produce of his flock to be according to his wishes, he ordered him to make use of the rod as a trial of his faith, and as a test of his obedience; -that Jacob obeyed, not believing this to be any more a sufficient cause of the effect, than Naaman, that washing in the Jordan could cure the leprosy.—Boothroyd.

in deceiving him, and afterwards changing his wages so often; and then observed to them, that God had turned all their father's devices to his advantage, and had taken away his cattle, and given them unto him. Then he acquainted them, that the Lord had appeared unto him in a dream, reminding him of the solemn vow he had made at Bethel, in his passage thither, and commanded him to return to the land of his fathers.

His wives having attentively listened to all that he said, agreed with his opinion concerning their father, consented to go with him, and desired him to perform whatsoever God had commanded.

Jacob immediately prepared for his journey, set his wives and children upon camels,* and proceeded with all his cattle and goods, taking the advantage of the absence of Laban, who was gone to shear his sheep; which likewise gave Rachel an opportunity of stealing and carrying off her father's images. +

* The camel is emphatically called by the Arab 'the ship of the desert.' He seems to have been created for this very trade, endued with parts and qualities adapted to the office he is employed to discharge. The driest thistle, or the barest thorn, is all the food this useful quadruped requires; and even these, to save time, he eats while advancing on his journey, without stopping, or occasioning a moment of delay. As it is his lot to cross immense deserts, where no water is found, and countries not even moistened by the dew of heaven, he is endowed with the power of laying in at one watering-place a store, with which he supplies himself for many days to come. To contain this enormous quantity of fluid, nature has formed large cisterns within him, from which, once filled, he draws at pleasure the quantity he wants, and pours it into his stomach, with the same effect as if he then drew it from a spring; and with this he travels patiently and vigorously, all day long, carrying a prodigious load through countries affected with poisonous winds, and parching and nevercooling sands. Bruce.—Mounted on this mild
and persevering animal, the traveller pursues his
journey over the sandy deserts of the East with
speed and safety. For his convenience, a sort of
round basket is slung on each side with a cover, which holds all his necessaries, between which he is seated on the back of the animal. Sometimes two long chairs, like cradles, are hung on each side with a covering, in which he sits, or stretched at his case, resigns himself to sleep, without interrupting his journey.

+ The Hebrew word Teraphim, signifies idols,

Jacob passed the river Euphrates, and made towards Mount Gilead, ‡ and though it was three days before Laban knew of his departure, yet in seven days he overtook him upon the mount.

There is the utmost reason to think that Laban pursued him with a mind bent upon revenge; but the Lord, mindful of the welfare of his servant, charged him most solemnly not even to hurt him by word; therefore, when he and his kindred came up with Jacob, he only expostulated with him on the want of respect he discovered in stealing away his daughters, and thereby preventing them from taking leave of him as became his children, or departing in a manner agreeable to their rank and dignity. § He added, that such a conduct might have exposed him to his most severe resentment, and that he might have sustained much injury from him, who was by far the most powerful; nay, he absolutely hinted to him, that he would

as appears from Gen. xxxi. 30, where they are termed Elohai or gods. It is also evident from 1 Sam. xix. 13, that they were of human form; for the very word is used for the image which Michal put into David's bed. These images they consulted as oracles concerning things unknown for the present or future. Some think that Rachel stole them, to prevent her father from discovering her flight, by consulting them, while others are of opinion that it was to secure something that might appease her father's anger, if he should overtake them in their flight. But these are at best but conjectures; though we have too much ground to think that our forefathers were tainted with this kind of idolatry

I Mount Gilead formed part of that ridge of mountains, which ran from mount Lebanon southward on the east of the Holy Land, and included the mountainous region called in the New Testa-

ment, Trachonitis,—Dr Wells.

§ That is, as Laban expresses it, 'with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp.' When the Prefetto of Egypt was preparing for his journey, he complains of his being incommoded by the sonnets of his Eastern friends, who took leave in this manner of their relations and acquaintance before their setting out. These valedictory songs, however, are not to be supposed to be a prelude to all their journeys, but only to those of the most solemn kind. There is therefore an energy in those words of Laban, which ought to be remarked, 'Why didst not thou tell me, that I might have sent thee away, and taken my leave of my daughters, going such a journey, with all due solemnity, according to the custom of my country?—Harmer. prohibition of God himself.

him with theft, saying, 'And now, though ted searching that place, where alone thou wouldest needs be gone, because the images were to be found. thou sore longest after thy father's house;

departure, his fear, lest, if he had achave prevented its accomplishment, by detaining his daughters by force; but, somewhat warmed with the charge of theft (not knowing that Rachel had stolen the images) he vehemently exclaimed, With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live!' And farther, to assert! his innocence, he calls upon him to search his goods before all that were present, and to retain whatever of his property he should find upon him.

Laban then proceeded to search, and having ransacked the tents of Jacob, Leah, and her two handmaids, he went into the tent of Rachel, who, conscious of her crime, and fearful of the anger both of her father and husband upon detection, had just concealed the images in the camel's furniture,* and sat down upon them.

have pursued measures of revenge, had he | Having used this precaution, when her not been diverted therefrom by the awful father entered her tent, she pleaded as an excuse for not rising to salute him, that Nor did he only upbraid him with want the custom of women was then upon of duty and affection, but even charged her, and Laban out of modesty omit-

Thus baffled by the cunning of his yet, wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?' daughter, after a long search he could not Jacob urged as an excuse for his abrupt find what he had so industriously sought. and was therefore very severely repriquainted him with the design, he would manded by Jacob, who not only reproached him with a most unjust suspicion, but appealed to his own friends to decide the case betwixt them. Then recounting the long service he had done him, during a number of years, concluded his upbraiding address in words to this purport: 'Except the God of my fathers had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty. But God hath seen my affliction, and the labour of mine hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.'

Laban, conscious that Jacob's charge was most justly founded, attempted not a vindication of himself, and therefore, waving the debate, he assumed an air of fondness and respect for Jacob, his wives and his children, as nearly related to himself, and proposed a covenant of peace between them. This being agreed to by both parties, they erected a pillar or heap of stones+ by way of memorial, and then

^{*} Rachel probably rode after the Arab mode, upon an hiran, which is a piece of serge, about six ells long, laid upon the saddle, which is of wood, in order to make the sitting more easy. This hiran is made use of as a mattress, when they stop for a night in a place; and it serves them to lodge on, as their wallets serve for cushions or a bolster. It was probably the hiran, part of the camel's furniture, under which she hid her father's teraphim; and on which she sat, according to their customs, in her tent, and therefore unsuspected. Harmer .- In the East, aged and infirm persons travel in double wicker-work seats, placed on the back of a camel, one on each side of the animal; they are formed something like a cradle; and have a back, head, and sides, like a great chair, Under the seat are store hampers, or baskets, containing those personal necessaries which may be needed by the traveller on the journey. Under the saddle of each camel is a coarse carpet, to cover them by night. This coarse carpet is the hiran mentioned by Harmer. It is probable that the camel's furniture, on which Rachel was seat-

ed, was the vehicle above described. - Script. Illustrated.

⁺ This monument Jacob seems to have erected after the same manner as he did that at Bethel. It must not be supposed to have been a heap of loose stones; for then it could not have continued long in the same position, nor given a name to the country around it. It was doubtless a regular and permanent building; but then, what the form and figure of it was it is not so easy to determine. Had it been only for a memorial to posterity, and not for some present transaction also, the figure either of a column or a pyramid would have been very proper: but we find, that the present use of it was, to eat and sacrifice upon, and therefore we may imagine, that it was made in the figure of a table, and have some authority to think of a round table, because the name which Jacob calls it by is taken from a verb which signifies to turn round, as the word Gilal is properly the circumference of a circle. - Bibliotheca Bibl.

took a mutual oath, that neither of them would invade the property of the other, and that Jacob would not treat his wives unbecoming an affectionate husband.

The ceremony thus finished, Jacob entertained his brethren that night upon the mount, and the next morning Laban took leave of his daughters and their children, and they both departed for their respective habitations.

CHAPTER VIII.

God again appears unto Jacob.—Jacob sends a messenger and presents to his brother Esau.

— Wrestles with an angel.—Is called Israel.—Meets his brother, who receives him hindly.—Dinah is ravished.—The Shechemites are circumcised, and afterwards destroyed together with their city by the sons of Jacob in revenge for the rape of Dinah.

As Jacob was favoured with a heavenly vision when he first departed from his father's, so it pleased God again to favour him with the same token of his protection at his return. When Jacob saw the angels that were sent to meet him on the way, he said, 'This is God's host: and he called the name of the place Mahanaim.'* Though this patriarch had the greatest reason to rely on the protection of the Almighty, yet as he was near the confines of Edom, and within the reach of his incensed brother Esau, whom he had highly provoked, and concerning the abatement of whose resentment he had received no account from his mother, though he had

been absent twenty years, he thought it most prudent to send a message to him in order to allay his anger, and regain, if possible, his fraternal affection.

He therefore ordered the messenger: to address Esau in these humble terms: 'Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: and I have oxen and asses; and men-servants and women-servants, and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.'+ The messengers having fulfilled their embassy, returned, and gave Jacob such an account as terrified him not a little. They brought no direct answer from Esau, and only told Jacob that his brother was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men. Concluding that the design of this mighty retinue was to act against him in a hostile manner, Jacob was greatly perplexed in what manner to proceed; he knew on the one hand, that his numbers were too small to engage with his brother; and that, on the other hand, his baggage was too heavy for flight: he therefore came to a resolution to divide his people and cattle into two bands, which being placed at a convenient distance, if Esau should fall upon one of them, the other might have a chance to escape.

This was the plan laid down by Jacob; but as he well knew, from former experience, that his safety depended upon the divine protection, independent of human measures, to the God of his salvation he applied in this critical juncture, in terms to the following import: 'O God of my father Abraham and Isaac, who saidst to me, Return to thy country, and I will do well by thee: I am not worthy of the

^{*} The original word signifies two hosts or camps; because the angels appeared like two armies, drawn up on either side for his protection, according to that beautiful expression of the Psalmist, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,' Psalm xxxiv. 4.—This place was situated between mount Gilead and the river Jabbok, not far from the banks of the latter, and very near the confines of Gad and half tribe of Manasseh, which was on the east of Jordan. It became in time a city of great strength, and for this reason was made choice of by Abner for the sent-royal of Isibosheth, the son of Saul, when he made war against David, and for a retiring place by David himself, during the rebellion of his son Absalom.—See Wells's Geography.

[†] By this submission, Jacob did not reject the honour God conferred upon him, but reverenced Esau as his elder brother. Besides, it is beyond a doubt that Jacob meant no more by the terms, lord and servant, than a mere honorary compliment, first practised among the idolatrous nations, and then used by the people of God, in order to soften the resentment of the rugged Esau.

least of thy mercies; but thou hast increased my stock, for when I passed over the river first, I had nothing but my staff, and now I am become a multitude: deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, for I fear his malice, lest he smite me and mine. Remember how thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy posterity as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'

After he had thus humbly and earnestly implored the guidance and protection of the Almighty, he determined to pursue another measure, which he hoped might appease the anger of his brother; for, imagining that he might esteem the first message but a mere formal compliment, he resolved, since he had already informed him that he was become very rich, to send him a very liberal present; but fearing that he might attack him before the present could be delivered, he was obliged to send that which was nearest at hand: which were these articles: two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes, and twenty rams; thirty milch camels with their colts; forty kine, and ten bulls, and twenty she-asses, with ten ass-foals, all in separate droves, ordering his servants to keep them at a proper distance, charging the servant who followed the foremost drove to deliver the present to his brother, and so on to the rest, hoping that such a submissive conduct might soften his rugged temper, and induce him to receive him kindly.*

Having dismissed the servants with his present to his brother, he passed the brook Jabbok + that very night, with his wives and children; and being left alone, there appeared a man who wrestled with him till the break of day, and permitted Jacob to prevail; but to convince him that he obtained not the victory through his own strength, he touched the hollow of his thigh and put it out of joint. At break of day, the angel desired to depart, but Jacob would not let him go, till he had blessed him. ‡

gence of what he was to expect. In the form of address, he ordered them all to make use of the same-words, 1st, That the repetition of them might strike the deeper, and make the stronger impression upon Esau; 2dly, That they might not spoil the compliment, or not speak so properly, if left to their own expression; and 3dly, That Esau might know, by the very turn and elegancy of them, that the words of the message came from Jacob.—Musculus. Ainsworth, Patrick, &c.

† This is a small river, which is by all agreed to flow from the adjacent mountains of Gilead; but some make it to run into the sea of Galilee, others into the river Jordan, below or south of that sea.—

Wells's Geography.

‡ Of all the adventures which happened to Jacob, that of his wrestling is deservedly reckoned one of the strangest, and has therefore been made a matter of doubt, whether it was a real event or a vision only. Maimonides, and some other Hebrew as well as Christian interpreters, are of opinion that all this was transacted only in Jacob's imagination. They suppose that the patriarch, being strongly possessed with the sense of the danger he was going to encounter, saw in a vision a man coming to him, and who, after some altercations, began to wrestle with him; that the conflict between them continued till break-of-day, when his antagonist, not able to get the better, desired to be gone, &c. and that, as a proof that this vision was more than an ordinary dream, it seemed to him that the angel touched his thigh, and in effect, as soon as he awoke, he found himself lame, probably by the force of his imagination. If this explication be admitted, the whole difficulty is at an end. It is natural perhaps for a man, under the apprehensions of a dreadful foe, to dream of fighting; and to dream at the same time, that he comes off victorious, might be accounted an happy omen. But it must be confessed, that the analogy of the story, and more especially Jacob's lameness, which was consequent upon his conflict, will not suffer us to think that all this was only in a dream. The more general therefore, and indeed the more retional opinion is, that this wrestling was real, and that Jacob was actually awake when engaged in it. But then the question is, who the person was that did encounter him? Origen, I think, is a little singular and nowise to be justified in his concert,

^{*} Several commentators have taken notice of Jacob's great wisdom and prudence, in the order and disposition of this his embassy to his brother. He sent his servants, and not his sons, though that would have been doing him a great deal more honour; but then it would have been running too great a risk. In the present which he sent, he put a space between drove and drove, that the more time was taken up in their passing by Esau, his passion might still grow cooler, and cooler; that the present itself might make so much the greater appearance; and that, if the droves, which went first, were not well-accepted by him, those who came later might be at distance enough to hasten back to their master, and give him intelli-

The man then inquired of him his name, and on his telling him it was Jacob, replied, 'Thy name shall not only be called Jacob, but likewise Israel;* for as a prince

when he tells us, that the person, with whom Jacob wrestled, was an evil angel, in allusion to which he thinks that the apostle grounds his exhortation: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' But that Jacob, who at this time was so immediately under the divine protection, should be submitted to the assault of a wicked angel; that he should merit the name of Israel, that is 'conqueror of God,' for overcoming such an one, or call the place of combat Peniel, that is, the 'face of God,' in commemoration of his conflict with such an one, is very absurd, if not an impious suggestion. Those who espouse this opinion, may possibly be led into it from a thought, that the person here contending with Jacob was an enemy, and come with a malevolent intent against him; whereas nothing can be more evident, especially by his blessing him before they parted, that he came with a quite contrary design. Among the people of the East, from whence the Grecians came and brought along with them several of their customs, wrestling was an exercise in great vogue, as highly conducive to the health and strength; and a common thing it was for two friends, when they met together, to amuse and recreate themselves in this way. The Jewish doctors therefore seem to be much in the right, when they maintain that the person who contended with Jacob was a good angel; and, as their settled notion is, that those heavenly spirits sing, every morning, the praises of God, at the approach of day; so the request, which his antagonist makes, 'let me go, for the day breaketh,' shows him to be one of the angelic host, who had stayed his prefixed time, and was now in haste to be gone, in order to join the heavenly choir: for the prophet Hosea, I think, has determined the matter very plainly, when speaking of Jacob, he tells us that 'he took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed.' How Jacob, who was an hundred years old, could be enabled to do all this, must be imputed to some invisible power that assisted him. An angel is here, in an extraordinary manner, sent to encounter him, and he in an extraordinary manner is enabled to withstand him. The whole scene is contrived to cure him of his uneasy fears, and a proper medium to do this was to let him see that an old man might contest it even with an angel, and yet not be foiled; and the power, he might reasonably conclude, which assisted him in this, if the matter were to come to blows with his brother Esau, would so invigorate his little army of domestics, as to make them prevail, and become victorious .- Stackhouse.

* We have in this place a remarkable instance that translations often contradict themselves; for it is very certain that this patriarch was afterwards

The man then inquired of him his name, donn his telling him it was Jacob, reand hast prevailed.'

Jacob, in his turn, demanded his name, but he waved answering him, and having blessed him, departed.

When the sun arose, Jacob removed from the place where he had wrestled, and called it Peniel, + 'because,' said he, 'I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.'

Jacob then proceeded on his journey, and had not gone far before he saw his brother Esau, attended by four hundred men; upon which he disposed his people in such order as best conduced to the reception of his brother, and safety of those he held most dear. He placed the two handmaids and their children foremost; Leah and her children in the middle, and his beloved Rachel and her son Joseph in the rear, and passed himself before them all.

When he approached his brother, he bowed himself seven times to the ground; but Esau, filled with the tenderest sense of fraternal affection, at once removed the necessity both of his fears and compliments, by running with eager joy to meet him, falling upon his neck, and most cordially embracing him.

Thus was revenge turned into love and pity; and Esau, who once thirsted for his brother's blood, dissolves into tears of joy, and melts into the softest endearments of friendship.

Esau thus transported with this happy interview, surveyed with pleasure his brother's immense store, but was with much difficulty persuaded to accept of a present. He saluted his wives and children; and as a further token of his affection and sincere reconciliation, offered to accompany him the remaining part of his journey.

called Jacob. No more therefore should be translated not only, which is very properly implied in this place, and would remove the seeming contradiction.

⁺ Peniel or Penuel, as it is in the next verse, that is, 'the face of God.'

that the children being tender, and many of the cattle young, if they were overdriven, most of them would die; and therefore desiring that his brother would pass over before him, and himself would follow gently, as the children and cattle could bear, until he should attend him in his own country of Seir.*

As Jacob declined his brother's offer. he courteously proposed to leave some of his people to guard and attend him; but Jacob likewise evaded this by a handsome

compliment.

They then parted from each other, Esau proceeding towards Seir, and Jacob towards Succoth, where, as he intended to take up his abode for some time, he built conveniences to shelter his people and

From Succoth he removed to Salem, a city of Shechem,+ where having purchased a piece of ground of the children of Hamor, for a hundred piecest of money, he spread his tent, erected an altar, and called upon the name of the most mighty God of Israel.

During the patriarch's stay in the country of the Shechemites, his daughter Dinah, who was now about sixteen years of age, desirous of seeing the dresses and ornaments of the women of that country, rambled abroad from her mother's tent. It fell out, that young Shechem, the son of Hamor, prince of that country, saw the

But Jacob, still retaining a spark of jeal- damsel, and being enraptured with her ousy, waved the kind offer, by telling him charms, and incapable of restraining his passion, seized on the opportunity of her being alone, to deprive her of her virtue.

This violation, instead of disgusting, inflamed him the more; for he afterwards loved her with an excessive affection, insomuch that not being able to live without her, he importuned his father to procure her for him in marriage.

The news of the rape soon reached the ears of Jacob, who suspended his resentment, till his sons came home from the field, when he made them acquainted with the injury their sister had sustained, and the dishonour that resulted to their family; upon which they secretly vowed re-

Shechem having prevailed with his father Hamor to use his interest in obtaining for him the beautiful Dinah, he took an opportunity, when Jacob and his sons were together, to acquaint them with his son's ardent love for the damsel, and entreat that he might have her to wife. enforce the entreaty, he proposed that Jacob's family should intermarry with his people, and offered them the freedom of the country, to dwell, trade, and settle therein.

To strengthen this proposal, Shechem, who was present at the conference, offered them what advantage they should please to nominate, bidding them only name their terms, and they should be granted to the uttermost, provided they would give him their sister in marriage.

The sons of Jacob retained their resentment, though as yet they concealed it: and, still desirous of avenging the dishonour done to their family; to avail themselves hereafter, they insisted on nothing less than a general circumcision of the Shechemites, as the only condition on which they would accept of an agreement to settle and incorporate with them.

Shechem was so enamoured of Dinah. and Hamor so fond of his son, that this very extraordinary proposal of the sons of

I This is sometimes rendered an hundred lambs, because the image of a lamb was stamped upon it, and it was originally of the value of that ani-

mal.

^{*} It is the opinion of most commentators, that Jacob never intended to meet Esau at Seir, and that this was only an evasion of Esau's offer.—Seir was situated on the south of the Dead sea, and extended from thence to the Arabian gulf.

+ Shechem, otherwise called Sichar, was a city

of Samaria, situate among the mountains belong-ing to the tribe of Benjamin, ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho, near which was Jacob's well, or fountain, where our blessed Saviour entered into conversation with the Samaritan woman .- Wells's Geography.

Jacob was complied with. To turther the agreement, the prince and his son, on their return to town, summoned their subjects together, praised the Israelites as a quiet, well-disposed people, and assured them, that if they should intermarry with them, they would become proprietors of their substance, which was very considerable, and all on the easy condition of being circumcised.

These weak people, captivated with the prospect of great wealth, consented one and all to the proposal of Hamor and Shechem, and were every male of them immediately circumcised.

Notwithstanding the Shechemites had submitted to the painful rite of circumcision, the proposed condition of reconciliation with Jacob's family; yet Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah, took advantage of their pain and anguish, when they were least able to resist; and on the third day* after the operation, fell upon the city, and destroyed all the male inhabitants; an action shocking to humanity; for doubtless many of the sufferers were entirely ignorant of the design of the leader. †

* This was the time, as physicians observe, when fevers generally attend circumcision, occasioned by the inflammation of the wound, and which was more painful then, as the Hebrews observed, than at any time else.

They likewise searched the house of Shechem, where they found Dinah their sister, and brought her out, after which they fell to plunder, and carried off not only what was found in the city, but all that was in the field, making the women and children prisoners; what they could not carry off they destroyed.

Thus did the sons of Jacob glut the revenge on the miserable Shechemites, the rape committed on their sister Din by the son of their prince.

Pious Jacob was not only not concerned in, but wholly ignorant of this slaughter committed by his sons, till it was over; for we find that he severely reprimanded their barbarity as threatening the most dreadful consequences to himself and his family: 'Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, amongst the Canaanites, and the Perizzites; and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.' But Simeon and Levi, who had been principally concerned in the destructive scene, urged as an excuse for their riotous behaviour, the regard they had to their sister's virtue; 'Shall he deal with our sister as with an harlot;' and so ended the remonstrance between the pious father and his two headstrong sons.

CHAPTER IX.

Jacob removes to Bethel.—Purges his house of idolatry.—Rachel dies in child-bed.—Jacob visits his father Isaac.—Joseph's piety and wisdom excite the hatred of his brethren.—Joseph's dreams increase their envy.—They therefore conspire his death.—He is sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharach's guard.—Judah's incest with Tamar.

THE savage disposition of the Canaanites, exasperated by the injuries they had sus-

[†] To execute rigour upon a submissive offender, is more merciless than just. Or if the punishment had been both just and proportionable from another, yet from them which had vowed peace and affinity, it was shamefully unjust. To disappoint the trust of another, and to neglect our own promise and fidelity for private purposes, adds faithlessness unto our cruelty. That they were impotent, it was through their circumcision; what impiety was this, instead of honouring a holy sign, to take an advantage by it! What shrieking was there now in the streets of the city of the Hivites! And how did the beguiled Shechemites, when they saw the swords of the two brethren, die cursing the sacraments in their hearts, which had betrayed them! Even their curses were the sins of Simeon and Levi, whose fact, though it were abhorred by their father, yet it was seconded by their brethren. Who would have looked to have found this outrage in the family of Jacob! How did that good patriarch, when he saw Dinah come home wringing her hands, Simeon and Levi sprinkled with blood, wish that Leah had been barren as long as Rachel! What great evils arise from small beginnings! The idle

curiosity of Dinah hath bred all this mischief; ravishment follows upon her wandering; upon her ravishment, murder; upon the murder, spoil. It is holy and safe to be jealous of the first occasions of evil, either done or suffered.—Hall,

tained from the sons of Jacob, seem to | from the worship of the only true God, he have been the motive of God's gracious command to the patriarch to remove his settlement and repair to Bethel, the place which he had dedicated to his immediate service: for though they had wholly destroyed one colony, there were more people that bordered thereabout, who either in defence of themselves, or in revenge for the cruel and unjust treatment of their countrymen, might give the good patriarch much disquiet, if not utterly destroy him. His omnipotent God therefore bid him arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there, and erect an altar to God, who appeared to him when he fled from the presence of his incensed brother Esau.

Pursuant to the command of the Almighty, the obedient patriarch having first strictly charged his family and all that belonged to him, to put away the strange gods* which they had, be clean,+ and change their garments; told them to arise and go up to Bethel, the house of God.

They immediately obeyed the charge, and delivered up to him their idols and their ear-rings,‡ which, to prevent their being a future snare to draw his family

privately buried under the oak near unto Shechem, from whence they were ready to depart.

When they proceeded on their journey, God, ever mindful of his promise to his chosen people, to insure their safety, struck such a terror into the cities round about them; that notwithstanding the provocation given by the massacre at Shechem, none pursued them, and they passed unmolested to Bethel.

Jacob, immediately on his arrival, according to the divine command, built an altar, and performed his vow to the most High: the very vow (as generally supposed) which he made when God appeared to him in the same place, as he fled from his brother Esau. Having performed this act of worship, it pleased the Lord again to appear to him, confirm his new name Israel, and give him repeated assurances of his promises made to Abraham and Isaac, with extraordinary blessings to himself.

In token of this signal favour of the Almighty, Jacob erected a pillar of stone, in the very place where he had been honoured with the divine intercourse, as a perpetual monument of his gratitude and devotion, pouring a drink-offering and oil upon the same. But Jacob tarried not long at Bethel; for, urged by filial affection, he set forward toward Mamre, in order to visit his aged father. They intended to have stopped in their way at Ephrath, § which, though not far distant from Bethel, they had not reached before Rachel fell in labour, and having very severe pangs, the midwife, to encourage her, bid her not fear, for she should have this son also. She was delivered indeed, but died immediately afterwards, having just a mo-

^{*} Some commentators are of opinion that Jacob here referred to the Teraphim which Rachel had stolen from Laban; while others suppose they were the idols of the Shechemites. However, that they were idols is as certain as the patriarch's casting them away was pious.

[†] The original word signifies the washing away of filth by water, in which sense it appears highly commendable in Jacob, on this solemn occasion, to enjoin all under his care to cleanse themselves from idolatry, and the guilt lately contracted by shedding innocent blood. Besides, it was customary for those who came to appear before the Lord, to wash their clothes. See Exod. xix. 10. Levit. xvi. 13. 2 Sam. xii. 10.

[‡] These were dedicated to some idol, and worn to render their gods kind and propitious to them; and as they thus served the uses of idolatry, we need not wonder they are particularly mentioned by Jacob. It appears that rings, whether on the ears or nose, were first superstitiously worn in honour of false gods, probably of the sun and moon, whose circular form they might be designed to represent. Maimonides mentions rings and vessels of this kind, with the image of the sun, moon, &c. impressed on them. These superstitious objects were concealed by Jacob in a place known only to himself.

of This place was afterwards called Bethlehem, a city about two leagues distant from Jerusalem, famous for the birth of David, king of Israel, but infinitely more so for the birth of Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world.—Calmet's Dictionary.

'son of sorrow;' but his father unwilling to increase the remembrance of so melancholy a cause, called him Benjamin, or 'the son of my right hand,' intimating thereby his peculiar affection for this last pledge of his beloved wife.

Jacob, to perpetuate the memory of Rachel, erected a monument over her grave, which remained a great number of years after this event.* To add to his excessive grief for the loss of one, to obtain whom he had undergone a long and painful servitude, his son Reuben, before they could reach Mamre, committed incest with Bilhah, his father's concubinary wife; of which, though he took no notice, he retained a painful sense to his dying day, as is evident from a reproachful hint he gave him just before he paid the debt of nature. Though these aggravated griefs sat heavy on his mind, he continued his resolution of visiting his aged parent, pursued his journey, and at length reached Mamre, and came unto the city of Arba,+ the place of abode both of his grandfather Abraham, and his father Isaac, who without doubt was overjoyed at the return of his son, as was the son at the sight of his venerable parent. So various are the accidents

ment's space to name the boy, Benoni, or | which befall the best of men in this state of trial, that pious Jacob had not long enjoyed the company of his aged father, before his patience was exercised by a very afflicting circumstance.

His son Joseph being now arrived to the age of seventeen years, was employed with his brethren in feeding the flock: and the lad observing their wicked behaviour had reported the same to his father. † This inflamed their resentment against him, and as they thought he was a spy upon them, they determined to remove him from among them.

Their furious rage was greatly inflamed by the extraordinary token of love which his father showed him, not only because he was the son of his beloved Rachel, but also because he was wise beyond his years. § This engaging quality so far wrought upon the foud parent, that to distinguish him from the rest of his children, he bestowed on him a fine vest of many colours, | not thinking it would inflame their jealousy and hatred to so excessive a degree.

This token of supereminence so exasperated Jacob's other sons, that they not only withheld from him the common offices of civility, but devised means to perplex and render him unhappy.

^{*} The learned Bochart is of opinion, that this monument of Rachel's (which is the first that we read of in Scripture) was a pyramid, curiously wrought, and raised upon a basis of twelve large stones, whereby Jacob intended to intimate the number of his sons. It was certainly standing in the time when Moses wrote; and, just before Saul was anointed king, there is some mention made of it, 1 Sam. x. 2. But that the present monument cannot be the same which Jacob erected, is very manifest from its being a modern and Turkish structure. M. Le Brun, who was at the place, and took a draught of it, says, that the tomb is cut into the cavity of a rock, and covered with a dome, supported by four pillars, on fragments of a wall, which open to the sepulchre. The work is rude enough, and without any ornament; but the whole is as entire as if it had been just made, which makes it hard to imagine that it has subsisted ever since Jacob's time. Maundrell's Travels, and Calmet's Dictionary.

⁺ Arba was afterwards called Hebron. It was situated on an emineuce twenty miles southward of Jerusalem, and twenty miles north from Beersheba.

[‡] There is a variety of opinions concerning the particular nature of the faults which Joseph had told his father were committed by his brethren. Some think it was their contentious way of living others, the sin of sodomy; others that of bestiality; but whatever it was, it may be gathered from their inveterate malice against him, that it was no small crime, because they hated him even to death.

According to the Hebrew text, the motive of Jacob's preferring Joseph to the rest of his children, was because he was son of the elders or senators, that is, he was teacher of his elders, and greatly excelled them in genius and capacity; our version can by no means be proper, for if his love was founded on the motive which that suggests, he must have loved Zebulun, as well as Joseph, since he was of the same age, and Benjamin more, who was born sixteen years after Joseph.

Whatever was the quality of this coat, it is plain that it was composed of divers colours; and as such garments were in high esteem among the Eastern nations, and worn by persons of the greatest distinction, this party-coloured dress distinguished him above his brethren and gave rise to their jealousy and hatred.

aversion was greatly increased by Joseph's two dreams, which he very innocently related to them, not imagining they were so maliciously disposed towards him, as he afterwards found them to be. The first dream was, 'that as he was binding sheaves with his brethren in the field, his sheaf arose, and stood upright, while their sheaves round about fell down; and, as it were, made obeisance to his.'

The brethren replied with scorn, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" His second dream, which he told them with as inoffensive a design as he had done the former, still added to their malice, 'I have seen (says he) the sun and moon and eleven stars fall down before me.' So greatly was he impressed with this event, that he could not conceal it from his father, who, either to appease the anger of his other sons, or check that presumption which in young minds so naturally arises from good omens, reprimanded him in these words: 'Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Jacob, who was no stranger to these visions, finding them thus repeated, stored them up in his memory as predictions of events that would certainly come to pass; and as he was uneasy with respect to his sons, who were now feeding their flocks in Shechem, thought proper to send Joseph to them, though it was near sixty miles distant from Hebron, the place where he now dwelt.

But by this means the pious father became the fatal instrument of delivering his darling child into the hands of his implacable brethren; for Joseph, in obedience to his father's command, went to Shechem, and not finding them there, wandered about till a stranger directed him to Dothan, * where, when they saw

to destroy him, saying one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh: + come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.' Reuben, who was less maliciously disposed than the rest, could not approve of the horrid resolution, and being desirous of protecting him from their rage, as he could not devise any open or direct method, persuaded them to cast him into a pit, that he might have an opportunity of delivering him again to his father. The rest, considering that if he perished in the pit, it would answer their end, consented to the advice of Reuben. This resolution was no sooner taken, than the innocent youth, unapprized of their malicious design, came up to them, and as he was about to deliver his father's indulgent counsel to them, they first stripped him of his party-coloured vest, and then cast him into the pit, which was then dry and empty.

Unaffected by this cruel treatment of their brother, they left him to perish in the pit, and without remorse sat down to regale themselves with what provisions the place afforded, certain that he must now inevitably perish with hunger. But the eye of Omniscience beheld his distress and pitied his despair, for as Reuben had been already the means of preventing his immediate death, Judah now becomes the means of delivering him out of the pit.

It happened, that as they were refreshing themselves, a company of Ishmaelites,‡ travelling with various merchandise from

^{*} It was a town about twelve miles to the north of the city of Samaria, as Eusebius informs us.—Wells.

[†] In the original it is, 'Behold this maker of dreams cometh;' which shows that they considered his dreams as fictions of his own, nay, is confirmed by their future conduct.

[†] These are below called Midianites. These people were near neighbours to each other; and were joined together in one company or caravan, as it is now called. It is the custom, even to this day, in the East, for merchants and others to travel through the deserts in large companies for fear of robbers or wild beasts.—Bishop Patrick.

Gilead to Egypt, approached, and Judah voured by some wild beast. This loss availing himself of the opportunity, in order to rescue his brother Joseph from certain death, urged the iniquity of being instrumental to the destruction of their own brother, by which they would contract an eternal stain of guilt; and advised them to sell him to the Ishmaelites, by which means they would not only save his life, but considerably promote their own gain. They immediately consented to Judah's proposal, and dragging Joseph out of the pit, sold him to the Midianitish merchants for twenty pieces of silver, and these carrying him to Egypt sold him to Potiphar, an officer* of the king and captain of his guards.

Reuben, who was absent when this circumstance happened, having proposed the casting Joseph into the pit in order to save his life, now went thither to see, and doubtless to assist him in making his escape; but astonished at not finding him, he returned to his brethren, rent his clothes, + and upbraided himself as the cause of his being lost: 'The child is not, and whither shall I go?' The guilty brethren, to take off all suspicion from themselves, concerted this scheme: they took Joseph's vest, dipped it in the blood of a kid, and sent it to their father, with this message; 'This have we found, know now whether it be thy son's coat, or no.' The good old patriarch was soon convinced to whom the bloody garment belonged, and not suspecting that any human hand could be guilty of such unnatural cruelty, concluded that he had been unhappily de-

was the most severe that the good old man ever sustained: when his beloved Rachel died, she paid the debt of nature in a natural way; but Joseph (according to his present apprehension) dies by a savage animal, and is barbarously torn in pieces before his time. His grief therefore knows no measure, he puts on sackcloth, and mourns for his beloved son many days; nay, so excessive was his sorrow, that when his children in general endeavoured to comfort him, he assured them he could only cease to mourn when he should follow him in the path of mortality. But as circumstances are interwovent by the sacred historian, we must beg leave to defer our further account of Joseph, in order to relate some intervening occurrences, which, being material, we cannot pass over unnoticed.

Some time before the late transaction. Jacob's son, Judah, had greatly varied from the received custom of his forefathers, in marrying a Canaanitish woman, by whom he had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah.

In process of time when Er, his eldest son, grew up to years of maturity, he took him a wife, whose name was Tamar. Er, for his abomination in the sight of the Lord, was suddenly taken off, upon which Judah advised Onan, his second son, to marry his brother's widow, in order to preserve the succession of the family.

Onan knowing that if Tamar should bear him any children, the eldest would inherit in the name of his elder brother deceased, and therefore not be accounted as his, pretended to follow his father's counsel, by going into Tamar's chamber;

[.] This word in the original signifies an eunuch, but cannot be taken here literally, but figuratively. It was the custom, and is still in those parts, to commit the keeping of the queen and women of quality to enuchs: but Potiphar cannot be supposed to be such, for he had a wife. Besides, it was customary among the eastern people to call their noblemen, eunuchs.

[†] This was one of the signs of ancient mourning, and used in cases of the greatest distress. From this behaviour of Reuben, it is most reasonable to conclude that he was absent, and consequently not privy to the transaction of selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites.

[†] Though the late and following events seem to be connected by the sacred writer, the marriage of Judah, of whom we are now about to speak, happened sometime before Joseph was sold into hgypt, though it is related by Moses after that event.

I This was long before the law, by which it was enjoined; yet though this is the first mention we have of it, it seems it was then a known custom. and well-understood even by young Onan.

ing to the Almighty, that the same judg- mite+ to redeem the pledge. ment was inflicted upon him as had been Hirah, seeking her in vain, returned upon his brother.

daughter-in-law, Tamar, to retire to her bring him into disgrace. father's house, and there remain a widow In the course of about three months, till he should grow up, when he should Judah was informed that Tamar his daughmarry her.

Tamar accordingly retired; and in process of time Shuah, Judah's wife, died, and senting the dishonour she had brought Shelah arrived at man's estate, but waiting a long time in vain the performance of folly and wickedness, ordered her to be Judah's promise, Tamar determined on brought forth, and publicly burnt. ‡ revenge for her disappointment.

father-in-law was going up to Timnath, in-law, assuring him at the same time, to shear his sheep, she took off her widow's that the man to whom those things hegarment, disguised herself in the habit of a harlot, and sat herself in an open path, through which she knew Judah must necessarily pass in his way to Timnath.

When Judah beheld her, he took her to be a prostitute, and as such desired intercourse with her. She denied not his request, but demanded of him the terms; he promised her a kid, and the woman having a further design upon him, required a security for the fulfilment of the terms, which by their mutual agreement were to be his ring or signet, his bracelets* and his staff. The pledges being delivered, they went together, and she conceived by

Judah had no sooner departed than she retired, and having put off her disguised dress, reassumed her widow's habit, which she had no sooner done than her deceived

but came out without following the instinct father-in-law went to his flock, took a kid, of nature. But this crime was so provok- and sent it by his friend Hirah the Adulla-

and told Judah; who therefore determined Shelah, his third son, being as yet too to let her keep the pledge, lest the disyoung for procreation, Judah desired his covery of his connection with her might

> ter-in-law had played the harlot, and was with child by whoredom; when he, reupon his family, and unmindful of his late

When she was brought forth, she pro-Being told at a certain time, that her duced the pledge, and sent it to her father-

The Hebrew word signifies a scarf, or girdle. The Chaldee renders it a handkerchief, but it is variously translated by the Syriac and Arabic, Some translate it something twisted: it seems to have been a girdle made of gold, twisted in the manner of a thread, and suspended from the neck, and not like a bracelet from the arm .- The ancient Hebrews wore their seals or signets, either as rings on their fingers, or as bracelets on their arms, a custom which still obtains in the East.

⁺ A citizen of Adullam, a famous town in Canaan, that fell afterwards to the tribe of Judah. -Bishop Patrick.

[‡] Among eastern nations, as well as elsewhere, women, who were guilty of adultery, were more severely punished than the men: whether it was that the injury done the husband was reputed to be more heinous, or that the men, having the power of making laws, took care to enact them in favour of themselves. Thus God is said, 'for the hardness of their hearts,' to have indulged the Jews in the matter of divorcing their wives; but the wives had not the like privilege over their husbands. In many places a man might have as many wives as he could maintain; but the women were to be content with one husband: and, in like manner, here Judah, we find, condemns Tamar, though a widow, for her crime to be burnt; whilst himself, in the same state of widowhood, thought fornication a very pardonable crime. It is questioned, however, by what right and authority he could pass this sentence upon her: and, to answer this, it is supposed, that every master was judge and chief magistrate in his own family; and that therefore Tamar, though she was a Canaanite, yet being married into Judah's family, and having brought disgrace upon it, was probably under his cognizance. His cognizance however (according to the opinion of some) did not extend so far as to have her burnt at the stake, (as we call it,) but only branded in the lorehead for a whore; though others deny that his authority extended so far: for, being in a strange place, it can hardly be thought that the power of life and death, or indeed of any other penalty, was lodged in him: and therefore they think, that the words mean no more than this, that she should be brought before a court of judi-cature, and sentenced according to the laws of the country.- See Selden, Le Clerc, and Howell,

longed, was the very person by whom she was with child.

Judah, convinced of the deception, acknowledged the pledge, and reflecting on the injustice he had done her, in withholding from her his son, whom he had promised her in marriage, transferred the crime upon himself, by declaring that she had been more righteous than him.*

When the time of her travail arrived, she was delivered of twins, one of which putting out his hand, the midwife bound it with a scarlet thread by way of distinction as the first-born; but he drawing back his hand, his brother came forth, whereupon he was called Pharez, which signifies an irruption or breach, and the other with the thread on his hand, Zara † Thus instead of the son raising up issue to the deceased brother, the father incestuously raised issue to the deceased son, but shocked at the horrid crime, he abandoned all future converse with that subtle woman.

CHAPTER X.

Death of Isaac.—Joseph is advanced in Potiphar's house.—Resists the temptation of his mistress.—Is falsely accused and imprisoned.
—Finds favour in the sight of the keeper, who commits to him the charge of two of Pharaoh's principal officers.—Interprets their dreams.
—Interprets Pharaoh's, and is thereby greatly promoted.—Begets children.—A famine succeeds the seven years plenty.—Joseph's brethren arrive in Egypt, and are imprisoned by him, but sent back on leaving one as a pledge, and promising to bring to him their youngest brother Benjamin.

WHEN Joseph was first sold into Egypt, his grandfather was living, but died in the

course of the event that followed, being an hundred and eighty years old, having lived longer than any since Terah. The good old patriarch was buried by his sons Esau and Jacob, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had purchased of Ephron, for a burying-place for his family.

But with the sacred writer we now resume our history, which has been interrupted by the transactions relative to Judah's family, and observe, that Joseph in process of time, by his faithful service so obtained the favour of Potiphar his master, that he not only dismissed him from every laborious office, but made him overseer of his whole property, and committed the charge of his house to his sole care and direction.

Joseph being thus appointed sole director of the concerns of Potiphar both within and without doors, the Lord was pleased to command a blessing on the house of the Egyptian, who flourished extremely, and daily increased in his good offices towards his faithful servant.

Thus situated, Joseph had reason to hope for a comfortable life, though sold to slavery, and await his liberty as the reward of his truth and fidelity: but it pleased God farther to exercise his faith and patience, in order to prepare him for a still brighter display of his grace and goodness towards his chosen people.

Joseph was of a very comely form, sweet complexion, and winning deportment: these united charms in process of time attracted the notice and excited the love of his master's wife, who, when all tacit tokens to draw the youth into an indulgence of her unlawful flame failed, was so fired by her eager passion, that she broke through every rule of decency, and in plain terms courted him to her bed.

^{*} He does not say Tamar was more holy or chaste, but more righteous or just; that is, Judah not keeping his promise in marrying her to Shelah, provoked her to lay this trap for him, resolving, since he would not let her have children by Shelah, she would have them by him: thus, though she may be deemed more wicked in the sight of God, she appeared more just in the judgment of Judah.

[†] Zara; that is, he ariseth, because he had given a sign of his coming, by putting out his hand.

[‡] Joseph at this time was about seven and twenty years old. For he was seventeen when he was sold to Potiphar, Gen. xxxvii. 2. and he was committed to prison immediately upon his non-compliance with his mistress's temptation; where,

(as vice seldom fails of assisting its servants:) it happened one day that Potiphar being in waiting on the king, and the rest of the servants employed about their work in the field, none but the comely Hebrew and his wanton mistress were left in the house.

When Joseph therefore came into the room where she was sitting, she again attacked him, and in plain terms asked him to lie with her. The innocent youth, startled at such an attack from one of her sex and quality, to avoid the commission of so disingenuous a crime, expostulated with her on its horrid and aggravated nature,

as far as it appears, he had not been long before he interpreted the dreams of the two disgraced courtiers; and, two years after that, he was re-leased and promoted, viz. when he was thirty years old: so that we may reasonably conclude, that this temptation befell him about three years before his releasement, i. e. in the twenty-seventh year of his age. At this time it is supposable that he was a comely person enough, but the stories relating to his excessive beauty, as they are recorded by the Talmudists, are ridiculous, and not much better than what Mahomet, in his history of the patriarch tells us, viz. That his mistress having invited the ladies of the town to a splendid entertainment, ordered Joseph to be called for, but that as soon as he appeared, they were amazed at his beauty, and so confounded that they knew not what they did, but instead of eating their meat, they eat their fingers, and said among themselves, 'This is not a man, but an angel.'—Josephus tells us that Potiphar's wife took the opportunity of a certain festival, when all the people were gone a merry-making, to tempt Joseph; that feigning herself sick, she decoyed him by that means into her apartment, and then addressed herself to him in words. ment, and then addressed herself to him in words to this effect :- " It had been much better for you, says she, had you complied with my first request; if, for no other consideration, in regard, at least, to the dignity of the person who is become your petitioner, and to the excess of my passion. Besides, it would have saved me the shame of condescending to some words and expressions which I am still out of countenance when I think of .-You might perhaps make some doubt before, whether I was in earnest; but this is to satisfy you, that I mean no ill by my persisting in the same mind. Take therefore your choice now, whether you will improve this opportunity of a present satisfaction, in the embraces of a creature that loves you dearly, and from whom you may expect still greater things; or stand the shock of my hatred and revenge, if you will presume to value yourself upon the vain conceit of your chastity, more than my favour," &c.—Bibliotheca Bib., Alhoran, and Josephus.

In a short time an opportunity offered, having given a positive denial: 'But he refused; and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither bath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

> But this repulse, sufficient to have filled with shame a mind not entirely lost to honour and virtue, had no effect on this lewd woman, whose desire grew so vehement, that she caught him by his garment, and again importuned him to lie with her; Joseph therefore, having no other means of escaping from her, left his cloak in her hand and fled.

Finding his virtue unconquerable, and fearing the disgrace that would attend the discovery of her shameful passion, as well as determined to revenge the denial, she came to a resolution of laying the charge upon him, to prevent its falling upon herself; feigning therefore a prodigious outcry and uncommon surprise, and holding at the same time Joseph's garment in her hand, those servants who were nearest the house immediately ran to her assistance; upon which she vehemently exclaimed, 'See, he hath brought in an Hebrew* unto us to mock us: he came unto me, to lie with me;' and further to engage them in her cause when the affair should come to examination, craftily added, 'And I cried with a loud voice; and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.'

Having thus prepared the servants to confirm her declaration, she laid the cloak by her, to produce it as an evidence against him on her lord's return. Poti-

^{*} She called not Joseph by his own name, but that of his people, 'an Hebrew,' to inflame them the more against him: for the Egyptians most inveterately hated the Hebrews.

phar had no sooner entered the house, than she most violently exclaimed against the dishonour offered her by his Hebrew servant; upon which the credulous husband, without the least inquiry into the merits of the cause, immediately committed him to the king's prison.*

Nor did a covenant-keeping God desert his faithful servant under this cloudy scene; for, thus bereft of friend, relation, and every kind of assistance, he received the clearest intimations of divine favour, and grew so highly in the esteem of the gaoler, that he committed all the prisoners to his care, and gave him, as his master had done before, the sole direction of all his concerns. This conduct of the prison-keeper was indeed founded on the same motive as that of Potiphar; for he, as well as the other, observed the extraordinary success with which God crowned all his undertakings.

While Joseph was confined, it happened that the king's chief butler and baker †

* It is somewhat wonderful, that, if Potiphar believed his wife's story, he did not immediately put him to death; but there is one thing which might check the violence of his passion, and that was, the good opinion he had for some time been confirmed in, of Joseph's virtue and integrity. Joseph, he saw, was young and beautiful, and therefore he might think it a thing not impossible for a lady of distinction to be in love with him, and upon a disappointment to be exasperated: as therefore he would not inflict any capital or corporal punishment on him, so he thought it prudent to hurry him away to prison unheard, lest, being allowed to speak in his own vindication, he might clear himself, and thereby bring discredit upon his family. It must not be de-nied however (what St Chrysostom has observed) that here again was a special, and as it were, a miraculous intervention of the divine power, which preserved his life, as it did before, when he was cast into the pit. The superior influence which softened the heart of Reuben, restrained the hand of Potiphar, in order to make our patriarch a more glorious example, and to complete those events, in the course of his life, which God had predetermined and foretold.—Chrysostom.

† It is evident from the sacred writings, that these men held considerable posts in the king's household. Diodorus Siculus confirms this assertion by affirming, that no home-born slaves were admitted to serve the kings of Egypt, but all their officers were sons of their most illustrious priests.

were committed to the same prison, and being delivered to the care of Joseph, he attended them in person, and thereby contracted an intimacy with them. On one and the same night, they each of them dreamed a very extraordinary dream, and being much affected with the same, Joseph demanded of them the cause of their melancholy? And they told him they had each dreamed a dream that night, and being in prison could procure no interpreter.

Joseph, to take off their minds from a reliance on the vain superstitions that prevailed in the country of the Egyptians. who in such cases trusted to diviners and soothsayers, having in a kind of appeal to them given them to understand that the interpretation of dreams belonged unto God, desired to know their dreams. The butler told him he dreamt he saw a vine that had three branches, which budded by degrees, then blossomed, and at length brought forth ripe grapes; that he held Pharaoh's cup in his hand, pressed the juice into the same, and gave it to the king to drink. Joseph thus interpreted the dream; 'The three branches denote three days; within which Pharaoh shall lift up thy head and restore thee to thy place; and thou shalt, as usual, give him to drink according to the duty of thine office.

All that the interpreter required for so agreeable a presage was, that he would remember him, when restored, and intercede with the king for his enlargement from a confinement inflicted upon him without any just cause. The other officer, prompted by the happy interpretation he had already given, proceeded to tell him that he dreamt he had three white baskets upon his head; in the uppermost of which was all manner of baked meats for the king's table, and the birds eat them out of the basket that was upon his Joseph readily interpreted his dream thus : 'The three baskets are three days, at the end of which thou shalt have.

on a tree, where the birds shall eat thy Joseph's interpretation was soon verified; for in the space of three days the butler was restored to his former office, and the baker hanged; but the former proved ungrateful, and unmindful of his promise; insomuch that a considerable space intervened between the time of his being restored and Joseph's enlargement and promotion in Pharaoh's house, which happened in consequence of the following incident.

When Joseph had been upwards of two years in prison, Pharaoh dreamt, that as he stood by the river Nile, there came up out of the river seven fat kine, and they fed among the flags; + after which he saw seven others extremely lean and hagged, and the latter devoured the for-

This dream awoke the king, but he did not long ruminate upon it before he slept and dreamed that he saw seven full ears of corn shoot from one stalk; and soon after seven thin and blighted ears sprang up, which likewise devoured those that were good and plenteous.

Pharaoh awaking in great surprise and concern, sent for all the magicianst and

thy head taken off,* and then be hanged | wise men, and told them his dreams, but none amongst them all could interpret one of them. Finding the king in the utmost perplexity concerning so extraordinary an event, the butler at length remembered Joseph, and informed Pharaoh, that when he and his fellow-servant laboured under his majesty's displeasure, they both dreamed in the prison, where a young man, a Hebrew servant to the captain of the guard, interpreted each of their dreams exactly answerable to the event.

The anxious king, pleased with the information of an able interpreter, immediately sent for Joseph, who was brought out of prison, and after having put on proper attire, waited upon his majesty, who, impatient to hear the event, told him without any prelude, that he had dreamed two dreams which none of his wise men could expound, and had therefore sent for him, as he was informed that he was skilful in the art of interpreting.

Joseph having informed him that the power was of God and not of himself, told * him he should receive an agreeable interpretation of the dreams.

Pharaoh then related his dreams, as already recounted, and Joseph told him they both implied one and the same thing, and that it was the will of God thereby to remind him of future events.

The dream he interpreted in this manner:

'The seven fat kine and full ears denote seven years of plenty: the seven lean

^{*} Though it may appear strange, that the sacred historian asserts the baker was beheaded first and hanged afterward, Philo observes it was customary to behead a criminal and then hang him up. Jeremiah also confirms this assertion, when he laments, that 'the princes were hanged up by their hands,' which intimates that they had lost their heads before.

⁺ The word which we translate meadow, signifies a flag, which, according to St Jerome, was a common name given to every vegetable that grows in a marshy place.

[†] The Chaldeans of old were the most famous people in the world for divination of all kinds; and therefore it is very probable that the word which we render magicians, is not of Hebrew, but Chaldee origin. The roots however, from whence it springs-if it be a compound word, as probably it is—are not so visible; and therefore commentators are perplexed to know by what method men of this profession proceeded in their inquiry into secret things, whether they pretended to expound dreams, and descry future events, by natural observations, by the art of astrology-which came much way .- Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.

in request in future ages-by such rules, as are now found in the books of Oneirocritics, or by certain characters, images, pictures, and figures, which were engraved with magical rites and ceremonies. It is not to be doubted indeed, but that the magicians, whom Pharaoh consulted for the interpretation of his dreams, made use of some at least, if not all these arts; and the Jewish doctors would make us believe, that, after several attempts of divers kinds, they came at last to this exposition, that Pharaoh's daughters-for they suppose hin: to have seven-should die, and that he should have seven others born to him in their stead; but this being not at all satisfactory to their master, put the cup-bearer in mind of Joseph's great abilities that

kine and withered ears, seven years of famine which were to succeed; and upon the whole, that there would be seven fruitful years followed by seven years so very barren and unfruitful, that the remembrance of plenty should be lost throughout the land of Egypt, and absolute famine universally prevail, and that the double dream was to assure him of the certainty of the awful event.'

Having thus interpreted the king's dream to his utmost satisfaction, though no small concern, Joseph takes upon him the office of a counsellor; and advises him to improve the hints given in the dreams, by selecting some wise and honest minister, who, under him, might be vested with full power to appoint proper offices in every city and town throughout his dominions; in order to lay up the fifth part of the general produce of the seven years' plenty in proper granaries; which reserve should be at the king's disposal, and secured against the seven years' famine.

· Such benevolent as well as provident care and counsel immediately obtained the approbation of the king, who, struck with the extraordinary foresight and sagacity of Joseph, hesitated not long in fixing the minister thus proposed; for, turning first to his subjects, and then to Joseph, he thus addressed them respectively: 'Can we find such a one as this is; a man in whom the spirit of God is? Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house; and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.'

As a confirmation of his exalted promotion, and to give his people a sense of the duty they owed him, he took the ring off his own hand, and putting it on Joseph's, vested him with every ensign of royalty;+ causing him to ride in the second chariot. and ordering his heralds to proclaim before him, 'Bow the knee,'t as a token of honour and subjection to him, as a chief governor of Egypt.

Having thus bestowed on him the greatest power and highest honours; to attach him more strongly to his interest, Pharaoh

unto you, observes, that inferiors, out of deference and respect, kiss the feet, the knees, or the gar-ments of their superiors. They frequently kiss the hand also; but this last seems not to be regarded as a token of equal submission with the others; for D'Arvieux observes, that the women who wait on the Arabian princesses, kiss their hands when they do them the favour not to suffer them to kiss their feet, or the border of their robe. The orientals, as a proof of their deep respect, not only kissed the fringe of the robe which their sovereign wore, but they carried their submission so far as to kiss the letters in which his orders were communicated; and they treated with almost equal respect the mandates of his chief ministers. The Arabs of mount Carmel, likewise, when they present any petition to their chief, offer it with their right hand, after having first kissed the paper. The editor of the ruins of Balbec observed, that the Arab governor of that city respectfully applied the firman or letter, containing the commands of the grand signior, to his forehead, when he and his fellowtravellers first waited upon him, and then applied it to his lips. To this custom Mr Harmer thinks Pharaoh probably refers in these words to Joseph: 'According to thy word shall my people be ruled.'

+ Joseph could not but foresee, that to live in the palaces of kings, and to accept of high posts and honours would be very hazardous to his virtue: but, when he perceived the hand of Providence so visible in raising him, by ways and means so very extraordinary, to eminence, and an office wherein he would have it in his power to be beneficial to so very many, he could not refuse the offers which the king made him, without being rebellious to the will and destination of God. To him therefore, who had secured him hitherto, he might, in this case, commit the custody of his innocence, and accept of the usual ensigns of honour, without incurring the censure of vanity or ostentation .-Stackhouse.

The word Abrech, which we render, 'Bow the knee,' is of uncertain signification. Some render it, 'Saviour of the world,' some 'Tender father;' and others, 'Bow the knee,' which certainly is most proper in this place, being a token of honour and subjection to Joseph, now appointed chier governor of Egypt.

^{*} Literally, 'At thy mouth shall all my people kiss.' The orientals vary their salutations according to the rank of the persons whom they address. When they salute a person of rank, they bow almost to the ground, and kiss the hem of his garment. The two Greek nobleman at Scio, who introduced the travellers Egmont and Heyman to the cham of Tartary, kissed his robe at their entrance, and took leave of him with the same ceremony. Dr Shaw, in giving an account of the Arabian compliment, or common salutation, Peace be

changes his name from Joseph to Zaphnath-paaneah,* and procures him an honourable alliance, by marriage with Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On.+

Then seven plenteous years commencing soon after his promotion, Joseph entered on his office of inspector-general of provisions throughout the kingdom of Egypt; and making a circuit, reserved all the food that could be spared from the absolute demands of present use in storehouses appointed for that necessary purpose.

The same method he invariably pursued every season of the fruitful years, till he

* Zaphnath-paaneah, that is, 'Revealer of secrets.' It was customary for princes to give foreigners a new name, to denote their naturalization, to take away all invidious distinction, and declare them worthy of their most intimate favour.

See Dan. i. 7.

† The word translated priest, signifies also the friend and privy-counsellor of the king, and the Chaldee renders it here, 'Prince of On.' Some English translations render it prince in the text, and set priest in the margin; and the last translation of it, renders it priest in the text, and sets prince in the margin.—On among the Egyptians signifies the sun. Hence the city On was uniformly rendered Heliopolis, or the city of the sun. The authors of the Greek version call Potipherah,

priest of Heliopolis. Respecting Joseph's heathen alliance, in marrying the priest of On's daughter, Stackhouse makes the following remark:—" Though in after ages all marriages with infidels were certainly prohibited, yet there seems to be, at this time, a certain disyet there seems to be, at this time, a certain dispensation current, for as much as Judah, to be sure, if not more of Joseph's brethren, had done the same: besides that, in Joseph's case, there was something peculiar. For, as he was in a strange country, he had not an opportunity of making his address to any of the daughters of the seed of Abraham; as the match was of the king's making, he was not at liberty to decline it, without forfeit. he was not at liberty to decline it, without forfeit-ing his pretensions to the royal favour, and consequently to the means of doing so much good; and, as it is not improbable that he might be advised to it by a particular revelation, so it is highly reasonable to believe that he converted his wife, at least, to the worship of the true God, before he espoused her: even though there should be nothing in that opinion of the Rabbins, that he made a proselyte likewise of her father, the priest of On, (who could not but be desirous to purchase, at any rate, so advantageous an alliance,) and took this occasion to establish the rite of circumcision, if not in all Egypt, at least among persons of the sacred order, who, according to the account of those who wrote the history of that country, in very early days, certainly were not without it."

changes his name from Joseph to Zaph- had amassed such quantities of provisions nath-pagneah.* and procures him an hon- as even to exceed computation.

During the time of plenty, two sons were born to Joseph, the eldest of whom he called Manasseh,‡ and the younger Ephraim.§

The seven years of plenty being expired, the seven years of dearth commenced, according to Joseph's prediction, and spread not only throughout the land of Egypt, but also the neighbouring countries; but through Joseph's provident care, under the blessing of divine Providence, Egypt was well furnished with provision, insomuch that application was made to Pharaoh not only by his own subjects, but foreigners, for bread and other necessaries of life

The king referred all that applied to him to Joseph, who opened the store-houses, and sold to the Egyptians and others, in such quantities and at such rates as seemed to him most just and equitable.

The famine having raged more than a year in Jacob's country, ten of Joseph's brethren, at the instigation of their father, came from Canaan to Egypt to buy corn, as they felt the effects of the dearth more severely than the Egyptians, who had corn laid up in store.

On their arrival, their business necessarily brought them before Joseph, who had the entire superintendence of the disposal of the corn: when they approached him therefore, they bowed as a token of reverence to his dignified office. Joseph no sooner saw them than he knew them to be his brethren; but choosing to try the effect of severity in bringing them to a due sense of their unnatural behaviour

[†] Manasseh, or forgetfulness, for said he, 'God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.'

[§] Ephraim, or fruitful, alluding to the words which immediately follow, 'God bath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.'

Thus was fulfilled the first of Joseph's dreams, concerning the subjection of his brethren to him, in future times.

towards him, abruptly demanded of them, suffer if they were innocent, he added, 'If whence they came? And on their replying, 'From the land of Canaan to buy provisions;' he charged them with being spies, who came thither to make discovery of the nakedness of the country.*

They assured him they came upon no such design, but merely to buy corn; and to enforce their declaration, added, that they were all one man's sons,+ who had been twelve formerly, but now were there only ten, the youngest being with their father, and the next to him dead.

But Joseph still insisted that they were spies, and to try them, put the charge upon this issue. 'Ye say,' said he, 'ye have a younger brother; agree upon one of you to go and fetch him, and ye shall be kept in prison the mean time, that I may be satisfied whether what ye say be true; otherwise, as sure as Pharaoh lives, I shall look upon you as spies.'t

He then committed them to custody for three days, in order to consult what was best to be done, and on the third day advised them to comply with his injunction; assuring them that he was actuated by the fear of God: 'This do and live, for I fear God:' and farther to assure them of his unwillingness that their families should suffer for their faults, or that they should

ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses, but bring your youngest brother unto me, so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die.'

Being reduced to a state of extremity, and knowing it vain to remonstrate with one under whose immediate power they were, they unanimously agreed to the proposal; while their present situation reminded them of the state of their brother, who might probably be dead, or under miserable circumstances; and they began to reproach one another with the same, in terms to this effect: 'Justly do we now suffer for our cruelty to our brother, to whom we refused mercy, though he begged it in the anguish of his soul, therefore God is just in sending upon us this distress.'

Reuben now took occasion to remind them of the consequence of their not attending to his desire and advice: 'Spake not I unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold also his blood is required.' It is to be observed, that Joseph before had spoken to them by an interpreter; and they therefore knew not that he understood their language; but now as he heard and understood their discourse, though the interpreter was absent, he was so affected with their case, that he was obliged to withdraw, that unseen he might give way to his affectionate tears.

When he returned to them again, he caused Simeon to be bound in their sight, §

+ As if they had said, we are not spies, but all the sons of one man, and surely it cannot be suspected that any person would send all his children on so dangerous a design.

^{*} That is, to observe the fortifications, and remark the weakness or nakedness of the land. Herodotus observes that Joseph's brethren entered Egypt through those passages by which alone it was liable to be invaded.

[‡] He that was hated of his brethren for being nis father's spy, now accuses his brethren for com-mon spies of the weakness of Egypt: he could not, without their suspicion, have come to a perfect intelligence of his father's estate and theirs, if he had not objected to them that which was not. We are always bound to go the nearest way to truth. It is more safe, in cases of inquisition, to fetch far about: that he might seem enough an Egyptian, he swears heathenishly: how little could they suspect this oath would proceed from the son of him, which swore by the Fear of his father Isaac! How oft have sinister respects drawn weak goodness to disguise itself, even with sins !- Hall.

It may be supposed perhaps, that because Reuben was the eldest, he upon this occasion had been the most proper hostage: but Reuben, we may observe, had showed himself averse to those lengths of wickedness and inhumanity in which most of the other brothers were agreed, against Joseph. Reuben, in short, resolved to save him, and as Judah was inclined to favour him, had Simeon joined with them, their authority might have prevailed for his deliverance; but Simeon was the person who was most exasperated against him. He was the eldest of those who had proposed to murder him,

and having set the rest at liberty, ordered | they obtain liberty of carrying on any their sacks to be filled with corn, and every man's money to be put in his sack; he then dismissed them.

When they came to the inn where they sojourned the first night, one of them, opening his sack to give his ass provender, observed his money in the mouth of it, and being surprised, acquainted his brethren with the unexpected event. When they beheld the money, they looked confusedly at one another, and esteeming this an additional judgment of God upon them, cried out, 'What is this that God hath done unto us?' In due time, however, through the clemency and kindness of their unknown brother, they reached the much desired land of Canaan.

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph's brethren relate to their father the particulars of their adventures .- Jacob is with . much difficulty prevailed on to send Benjamin into Egypt .- Joseph's brethren arrive in Egypt, and are kindly entertained by him .- Joseph's device to prolong the stay of his brethren .-He at length makes himself known to them, and sends for his aged father, who is rejoiced at the news of so unexpected an event.

THE sons of Jacob being arrived at the habitation of their venerable father, with eagerness of impatience told him the particulars of their journey, but especially the reception they had met with from the vicerov of Egypt; who, having charged them with being spies, and they being wholly incapable in a strange country of clearing themselves, had obliged them to leave Simeon behind in prison, as a pledge, till they should bring Benjamin, on which terms alone their innocence could be justified, or

and was therefore a fit proxy for the rest; the man, as the Hebrews say, who put Joseph in the pit, and was now very justly to be served in his kind: though they who tell us this, have a tradition, that, as soon as his brothers were gone, Joseph had him unbound, and ordered him what provisions and conveniences he pleased during his confine-ment.—Patrick's Commentary, and Bibliotheca Bibl.

traffic in the land of Egypt.

This news greatly affected the good old patriarch, who was already bereft of two of his children, and now on the point of losing his youngest son Benjamin. increase his concern, when they emptied their sacks every man's money was found in his sack, from whence they all feared that this circumstance might afford fresh matter of accusation and hinder their clearing themselves of the charge alleged against them. But the case was urgent; Reuben therefore, to prevail with his father to consent to the departure of Benjamin, desired him to commit the care of this darling child to him, engaging, on the penalty of losing his own two children, to restore him in safety.

But this proposal had little weight with the affectionate patriarch, who answered him in a manner remarkably pathetic, and which paints him to us in an attitude of grief, lamenting the loss of his children in the most melting terms of paternal fondness: 'My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead,* and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

In this state of doubt and perplexity they passed their time, ill their stock being exhausted, their father desired them to repair to Egypt in order to replenish it, taking no notice of the injunction the viceroy had laid upon them, not to presume to approach him more without their brother Benjamin.

His sons, knowing that their departure without him would not only argue in them the greatest folly and rashness, but also expose them to the resentment of the second person in the kingdom, and at the same time, thinking it impossible to bring their father to consent, were re-

^{*} His only brother by the mother Rachel, his beloved wife,—Joseph and Benjamin being the only children descended from Rachel.

duced to the utmost dilemma. Reuben had tried his efforts in vain; Judah therefore addressed him in more positive terms, urging at once the absolute and indispensable necessity of carrying Benjamin with them; 'as the viceroy had most solemnly declared, they should not so much as see his face, if they brought not their brother Benjamin with them.'

The poor old man, thus reduced to a strait, in the fulness of his soul reproves his sons for acquainting the man that they had a brother. And they in excuse told him, 'that he inquired so minutely into their circumstances and family, that they could not possibly avoid it: nay, he even asked if they had another brother, and whether their father was living; and added moreover, that they had no reason to suppose he would have obliged them to bring their brother with them.'

Judah now observing his father in some kind of doubt, repeats the necessity of their return, and forcibly urges him to consent; 'Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and also our little ones: I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.'

Affection at length submitted to necessity, which wrought the good old man into compliance; he therefore advised them, as it must be so, to take some of the most valuable commodities of the country, such as balm, spices, myrrh and almonds, together with double money in their sacks (lest the price of what they had already brought away should he demanded), and their brother Benjamin; adding, for their success, this fervent and pious prayer: 'And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin.' And taking his leave of them, affectionately said: 'If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.'

Thus patiently acquiescing with the

Reuben will of heaven, he dismissed them, who, according to his advice, having taken double money, a present to appease the incensed viceroy, and their brother Benjamin, departed, being animated with the hope of appearing in Egypt with honour and credit.

Immediately on their arrival, they were presented to the viceroy, who, observing his favourite Benjamin among them, commanded his steward to conduct them into the house, and provide suitable entertainment, as he intended they should dine with him. In obedience to his master's command, the steward conducted them in, and observing their fear, inquired the cause; and when they told him it arose from a suspicion, that they were detained for the sake of the money which was left in their sacks at their late departure, he

^{*} From time immemorial it has been the universal custom in the East to send presents one to another. No one waits upon an eastern prince, or any person of distinction, without a present. This is a token of respect which is never dispensed with. How mean and inconsiderable soever the gift, the intention of the giver is accepted. Plutarch informs us that a peasant happening to fall in the way of Artaxerxes the Persian monarch in one of his excursions, having nothing to present to his sovereign, according to the oriental custom, the countryman immediately ran to an adjacent stream, filled both his hands, and offered it to his prince. The monarch, says the philosopher, smiled and graciously received it, highly pleased with the good dispositions this action manifested. All the books of modern travellers into the East abound with numberless examples of this universally prevalent custom of waiting upon great men with presents,-unaccompanied with which, should a stranger presume to enter their houses, it would be deemed the last outrage and violation of politeness and respect. So common is the custom, that in familiar intercourse among persons of inferior station, they seldom neglect to bring a flower, an orange, a few dates or radishes, or some such token of respect, to the person whom they visit. In Egypt the custom is equally prevalent: the visits of that people, which are very frequent in the course of the year, are always preceded by presents of various kinds, according to their station and property. So essential to human and civil intercourse are presents considered in the East, that, says Mr Bruce, "whether it be dates or diamonds, they are so much a part of their manners, that without them an inferior will never be at peace in his own mind, or think that he has a hold of his superior for his favour or protection." -Harwood and Paston.

and the God of their fathers who had put that treasure into their sacks, and in order to comfort them, brought forth their brother Simeon, and gave orders for them to be treated with the utmost civility.

As the steward had informed them they were to dine with the viceroy, they prepared their presents, which, when he entered, they offered with the lowest prostration.

Joseph saluted them with the utmost cordiality, anxiously inquiring concerning the welfare of the good old man. submissively replied, 'Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive.' Though Joseph addressed his brethren in general terms, his attention was chiefly fixed upon his brother Benjamin, who was most near and dear to him; he therefore inquired of them, if he was the younger brother whom they had mentioned? And without waiting for an answer, thus saluted him: 'God be gracious unto thee, my son.' His affection was now wrought to such a pitch, that, unable to contain the flood of tears that was ready to gush, he retired hastily into his chamber, in order to give vent to the excess of his passion.

When he had dried his tears, and washed his face that it might not appear he had wept, he returned to them very cheerfully, and ordered the provision to be brought upon table. Joseph, on account of his exalted station, sat by himself, provision having been prepared for his brethren by themselves, and also for the Egyptians, who were to dine with him, by themselves; for the Egyptians disdained to eat with the Hebrews, who were employed in the humble state of a pastoral life.

The brethren were placed in rank exactly according to their respective ages, a circumstance which not a little surprised them: * thus placed, Joseph sent each of

bid them fear nothing, for it was their God them a mess from his own table; but to Benjamin he sent a mess containing five times as much as any of the rest; + however, they were all refreshed and cheerful ly regaled. Jacob's sons being thus cordially received, and generously entertained, had reason to banish their fears and encourage their hopes; but a cloud yet hung over them; for though Joseph, from his ardent love towards his brother Benjamin, immediately desired to make himself known, yet he deferred it some time longer, in order to accomplish a scheme, that might again perplex and remind them of the cruel manner in which they had formerly treated him, as well as try their affection towards his darling brother Benjamin.

> To effect this design, he ordered his steward to fill their sacks with corn, and to put every man's money in his sack, but to put into the sack of the youngest not only his money, but the silver cup out of which he used to drink. This done, early the next morning they proceeded on their journey homeward, but were not far advanced, when Joseph ordered his steward to pursue, and reproach them with the highest ingratitude, in carrying off the particular cup out of which his lord drinketh and divineth.

Conscious of their innocence, they were

^{*} As they knew not their brother Joseph, they might well marvel by what means he could attain to so exact a knowledge of their respective ages

⁺ The manner of eating among the ancients was not for all the company to eat out of one and the same dish, but for every one to have one or more dishes to himself. The whole of these dishes were set before the master of the feast, and he distributed to every one his portion. As Joseph however is here said to have had a table to himself, we may suppose that he had a great variety of little dishes, or plates set before him; and, as it was a custom for great men to honour those who were in their favour, by sending such dishes to them as were first served up to themselves, Joseph showed that token of respect to his brethren: but, to express a particular value for Benjamin, he sent him five dishes to their one, which disproportion could not but be marvellous and astonishing to them, if what Herodotus tells us be true, namely, 'that the distinction in this case, even to Egyptian kings themselves, in all public feasts and banquets, was no more than a double mess.'-Patrick's Commen tary, and Bibliotheca Bibl.

not affected by the charge, and as a test of their integrity, reminded the steward of their bringing back the money which they found in the mouths of their sacks: nay, so confident were they of their probity, that to obviate even a suspicion, they offered to stand search under the severest penalties: 'With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.'

The steward took them at their word, but softened the penalty, fixing it that he on whom the cup should be found, should be his servant, and the rest blameless.*

Impatient to prove their innocence, every one hastily unloaded his beast; and as they opened their sacks, the steward searched them, and beginning at the eldest, and proceeding on to the youngest, found the cup in Benjamin's sack.

Here was an absolute conviction without the shadow of guilt; yet in vain did the poor youth pretend to a defence against evident demonstration. Benjamin's life, at least his liberty, was forfeited by mutual agreement. They rent therefore their clothes, and without attempting even to palliate the fact, loaded their asses, and returned to the city.

Joseph had remained at home expecting the event, and when they approached his presence, they fell to the ground in a most sorrowful submission.

Without giving them time to offer a word in their own defence, Joseph charged them with the fact, and their folly in committing it without the least prospect of concealment; 'What deed is this ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?'‡ In the midst of

* The Hebrew word signifies innocent or fault-less.

which exceeds all the compositions of human invention, and flows indeed from such natural passions, as art can never imitate. So that, upon a review of his whole conduct, Joseph is so far from deserving blame, that all this seeming rigour and imperiousness of his did eventually produce a great deal of good; and was in reality, no more than the heightening the distress, or thickening the plot, as we call it, to make the discovery, or future felicity, he intended his family, more constituted.

spicuous and agreeable. - Stackhouse.

⁺ It may be thought perhaps a piece of cruelty in Joseph, to have his cup conveyed, of all others, into Benjamin's sack, and thereupon to threaten to make him a bond-slave for a pretended felony: but herein was Joseph's great policy, and nicety of judgment. He himself had been severely treated by the rest, when he was young, and therefore was minded to make an experiment, in what manner they would now behave towards his brother: whether they would forsake him in his distress, and give him up to be a bond-slave, as they had sold him for one; or whether they would stand by him in all events, make intercession for his release, or adventure to share his fate. This, perhaps, may be thought his carrying the matter a little too far: but, without this conduct, Joseph could not have known whether his brethren rightly deserved the favour and protection which he might then design, and afterwards granted them. Without this conduct, we had not had perhaps the most lively images that are to be met with in scripture, of injured innocence, of meekness and forbearance, and the triumphs of a good conscience in him; and of the fears and terrors, the convictions and self-condemnations of long-concealed guilt in them. Without this conduct, we had not had this lovely portraiture of paternal tenderness, as well as brotherly affection; we had never had those solemn, sad, and melting words of Jacob, 'If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved,' enough to pierce a tender parent's heart; or those others, 'Joseph is alive, I will see him before I die, enough to raise it into joy and exultation again. In a word, without this conduct, we had never had that courteous, that moving, that pleasingly mournful speech, wherein Moses makes Judah address Joseph, in behalf of his poor brother Benjamin,

[‡] As magical arts of divers kinds were in use among the Egyptians many years before Joseph's time of coming thither; and as Joseph, by his wonderful skill of interpreting dreams, had gained a great reputation for knowledge, and perhaps, among the populace, might pass for a diviner; he took an occasion from hence, in order to carry on his design, to assume a character that did not belong to him. There is no reason, however, to infer from the words of Joseph and his steward that the art of 'divining by the cup' was then in use in Egypt, because the words before us do not relate to this cup as the instrument, but as the subject of divination; not as the thing with which, but as the thing concerning which this magical inquiry was to be made, and so the sense of the steward's words will be, 'How could you think, but that my lord, who is so great a man at divination, would use the best of his skill to find out the persons who had robbed him of the cup, which he so much prizes?' And this tallies exactly with the words of Joseph, 'Wot ye not that such a man as I,—I, who have raised myself to this eminence by my interpretation of dreams, and may therefore well be accounted an adept in all other sciences, should be long at a loss to know who the persons were that had taken away my cup?' This seems to be the natural sense of the

tone, cries out to this effect, 'We have nothing to offer in our defence; God hath detected our iniquity, and we must remain slaves with him in whose sack the cup was found.'

Joseph interrupted him by declaring that he could by no means do such injustice; for that he only who stole the cup should be his slave, while the rest of them should return home to their father.

Judah, finding the viceroy somewhat softened, was encouraged to approach him nearer, and represented to him, in a very pathetic manner, the case between them and their father, relative to their bringing

words: the only one indeed that they will fairly bear: and though they do not imply that Joseph was actually a magician, yet they seem to justify the notions of those men who think that he carried his dissimulation to his brethren so far, as to make them believe that he really had some knowledge

that way .- Stackhouse.

Although we have no reason to infer that Joseph practised divination by the cup, yet it certainly prevailed in Egypt in the time of Joseph, and it has from time immemorial been prevalent among the Asiatics, who have a tradition, the origin of which is lost in the lapse of ages, that there was a cup which had passed successively into the hands of the different potentates, and which possessed the strange property of representing in it the whole world, and all the things which were then doing in it. The Persians to this day call it the 'Cup of Jemsheed,' from a very ancient king of Persia of that name, whom late historians and poets have confounded with Bacchus, Solomon, Alexander the Great, &c. This cup, filled with the elixir of immortality, they say, was discovered when digging the foundations of Persepolis. To this cup the Persian poets have numerous allusions: and to the intelligence supposed to have been received from it they ascribe the great prosperity of their ancient monarchs, as by it they understood all events, past, present, and future. Many of the Mohammedan princes and governors affect still to have information of futurity by means of a cup. Thus when Mr Norden was at Delir or Derri in the farthest part of Egypt, in a very dangerous situation, from which he and his company endeavoured to extricate themselves by exerting great spirit, a spiteful and powerful Arab in a threatening way told one of their people, whom they had sent to him, that he knew what sort of people they were, that he had consulted his cup, and had found by it that they were those of whom one of their prophets had said, that Franks would come in disguise, and passing every where, examine the state of the country, and afterwards bring over a great number of other Franks, conquer the country, and exterminate all. It was precisely the same thing

a general horror, Judah, in an humble | their brother Benjamin into Egypt, passionately describing the old man's extraordinary affection for this child of his age; the regret with which he parted from him. the inconsolable loss that would result from his being detained, and the curses he would pronounce on them in his departing moments, for depriving him of what he held most dear.

> To this striking representation he added, Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bond-man to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren; for how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.'

> This pathetic address struck Joseph to the very soul. Ordering therefore all the rest to depart, that he might discover himself with more affectionate freedom. he burst into tears, and pathetically exclaimed, 'I am Joseph; doth my father live?'-What a beautiful transition! His soul was so full of filial affection for the good old man, that before he had finished his sentence, he inquired after him, though they had before told him he was alive.

> Conscious guilt, at the very name of that Joseph whom they had so unnaturally treated, struck them dumb, as they now dreaded the power he had to resent

> that Joseph meant when he talked of divining by his cup. Julius Serenus tells us, that the method of divining by the cup among the Abyssinians, Chaldees, and Egyptians, was to fill it first with water, then to throw into it their plates of gold and silver, together with some precious stones, whereon were engraven certain characters: and after that, the persons who came to consult the oracle used certain forms of incantation, and so calling upon the devil, received their answers several ways; sometimes by articulate sounds, sometimes by the characters, which were in the cup, arising upon the surface of the water, and by this arrangement forming the answer; and many times by the visible appearing of the persons themselves about whom the oracle was consulted. Cornelius Agrippa tells us likewise, that the manner of some was to pour melted wax into a cup containing water, which wax would range itself into order, and so form answers, according to the questions proposed .- Horne.

the injuries they had done him. But brotherly love overcame resentment, and banished every desire of revenge; for Joseph observing the confusion of his brethren, in the most endearing accents bids them approach, assuring them he was the very brother they had sold into Egypt; and though he had assumed the dignity becoming his office, he still retained the tenderness of a brother; and lest their fear should prevail, he desired them no longer to afflict themselves with remorse for their former behaviour towards him, since it was the means by which a wise providence was pleased to dispose of him for their preservation.

He then proposed that they should bring his father, and the whole family of Israel out of Canaan into Egypt; and as an inducement to them to leave their own country, desired them from him to address their father to this effect: 'God hath made me lord of all Egypt, therefore defer not coming; for I will provide Goshen* for the place of thy habitation, and there will I nourish thee and thy family, lest they come to want.'

Lest they might doubt that he was indeed their brother Joseph,† he told them, 'Your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, (whom my father will especially regard,) that it is I myself that speak to you. And to comfort my father,

tell him of my glory here, and all that you have seen; and make haste and conduct him hither.'

Then taking Benjamin in his arms, they wept for joy; and, as a seal of pardon for all offences, he tenderly embraced, kissed them severally, and wept over them. Joseph's kind carriage and reconciliation having dispelled their fears and apprehensions of the severe resentment they might justly have expected from him, they took heart, and conversed familiarly with him.

The report of the arrival of Joseph's brethren soon spread in Pharaoh's court, which, for the great respect all had to Joseph, was very agreeable to the king and all about him; who immediately orders Joseph to send his brethren to conduct his father, and all that belonged to him, into Egypt, where he should share of the best during the famine, of which there were five years to come.

Joseph gladly obeys, and accordingly provides carriages and food for their journey. But for a present to his father he sent ten asses laden with the choicest dainties Egypt afforded, and ten she-asses laden with corn and provisions for him by the way. To cheer his brethren, and confirm his love to them, he gave to each of them changes of raiment; but to distinguish Benjamin from the rest, he gave him three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes or suits of clothes: and knowing their quarrelsome disposition, and fearing they should enter into some debate who was most in fault for the injury done to him, he lays a strict charge upon them, not to fall out by the way.

Joseph having dismissed his brethren, they make the best of their way to Canaan, where they were joyfully received by their good old father, especially upon the return of his two sons, Simeon and Benjamin, whom he scarce expected to see again. But when they acquainted him with Joseph's being alive, and the grandeur he lived in, his former grief revived, and dis-

† Joseph having before spoken to them by an interpreter, he bids them observe that, now he spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue, they might the better be assured that it was he their brother

that had hitherto conversed with them.

^{*} The land of Goshen, called also the land of Rameses, lay east of the Nile, by which it was never overflowed, and was bounded by the mountains of the Thebaid on the south, by the Nile and Mediterranean on the west and north, and by the Red sea and desert of Arabia on the east. It was the Heliopolitan nome or district, and its capital was called On. Its proper name was Geshen, the country of grass or pasturage, or of the shepherds, in opposition to the rest of the land, which was sown after having been overflowed by the Nile. Bruce.—Goshen was the most fruitful part of all Egypt, especially for pasturage, and therefore most commodious for Jacob's sons, who were brought up shepherds.

gave, he had like to have died: but when he saw the carriages, with the presents and provisions, Joseph had sent for him, his fainting spirits, like an oil-spent lamp opportunely supplied, revived, and in an ecstasy of joy, he cried out, 'This is beyond my expectation: my son Joseph yet alive! I will go and see him before I die.' Accordingly he took his journey with all that he had; and stopping at Beer-sheba,* he offered sacrifice to the God of his father Here it was God spake to Israel in the visions of the night, bidding him fear not to go down into Egypt,+ for he would there make of him a great nation; that he would go with him, and surely bring him thence again, ‡ and that his beloved Joseph should there close his eyes. §

Jacob encouraged by this divine promise left Beer-sheba, and cheerfully pursues his journey towards Egypt; his sons carrying with them their little ones and their wives in their waggons which Pharaoh had sent to convey them.

They took also with them their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob,

trusting the extravagant account they gave, he had like to have died: but when he saw the carriages, with the presents and seventy persons.**

Jacob being arrived on the borders of Egypt, despatches his son Judah before him, to receive directions for going to Goshen; who soon returns to his father, and conducts him thither; where Joseph, with a train becoming his high station, meets him, and with infinite satisfaction congratulates his happy arrival in a place where he had power to make the rest of his life easy and comfortable.

Here were the highest ecstasies of filial duty and parental affection expressed: tears of joy flowed on both sides; and whilst Joseph was contemplating the divine goodness that had restored him once more to the sight of his aged father, the pious patriarch, thinking his joy on earth complete, desired to live no longer: 'Now,' says he, 'let me die, since I have seen thy face.'

CHAPTER XII.

Joseph introduces his father and brethren to the king, who receives them graciously, and appoints them ample maintenance.—Jacob's charge.—He blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph.—Blesses his sons in particular, and having given them charge concerning his burial, dies.—Jacob's burial.—Joseph predicts the return of his brethren and dies.

AFTER these mutual endearments, Joseph proposes to his father and brethren that he would acquaint the king with their arrival; which he was in gratitude obliged to do,

† Though God had promised the land of Canaan to Israel's posterity, yet he persuades him to go into Egypt,—though a country where his ancestors had been ill-treated—for he would protect him.

† That is, not that he should live to come out of Egypt, but that his body should be carried from thence to be buried in the sepulchre of his ancesters, and that his posterity should possess the promised land, from which he was departed. For as to Israel's dying in Egypt, it is plain that God at the time of this vision told him he should die there, Gen. xlvi. 4. for there Joseph is promised to close his eyes.

§ From hence Jacob might justly infer that he should die a natural death, and that his son Joseph should be with him to the last moments of his life; which was a great comfort to the fond old patri-

arcii.

** The names of Jacob's family, which he brought with him into Egypt, are particularly expressed, Gen. xlvi. 8, 25. And both here and Deut. x. 22. are computed to be in the whole number three-

score and ten persons.

^{*} Here it was where the Lord appeared to his father Isaac, and blessed him, and where his father built an altar, and worshipped the Lord, Genesis xxvi. 23, 24, 25. But by Jacob's offering sacrifice here, it may reasonably be supposed that so religious a man as he was, not only gave God thanks for the preservation of his son Joseph, and safe return of his other sons, but implored the divine protection and blessing upon him and his in the journey he had now undertaken.

This will admit of a two-fold meaning: first, as it was a general way of speaking, such as Sarah used when she said, 'Who should have said to Abraham that Sarah should have given suck to children?' Gen. xxi. 7. whereas she never gave suck but to one child, Isaac. Secondly, though Jacob strictly had but one daughter, who was Dinah, yet here he may be understood to speak of his daughters-in-law.

ince the king had sent for them, instructing them at the same time that he would acquaint him with their manner of life, which was in breeding and nourishing cattle, that if he should inquire of them what occupation they were bred to, they should answer accordingly; by which they would secure the land of Goshen for their use, where they might live and take care of their flocks and herds by themselves; for the Egyptians did so abominate shepherds, that they would never suffer them to live promiseuously amongst them.*

* The country of Egypt (as Diodorus tells us, b. i.) was divided into three parts, whereof the priests had one, the king a second, and the soldiery a third : but, under these, there were three other ranks of men, shepherds, husbandmen, and artificers. The husbandmen served the king, and the other two orders, in tilling the ground, for very small wages, and so did the shepherds, in their capacities; for the Egyptians, we must remember, had sheep and oxen, as well as horses and asses, which they sold unto Joseph in the time of the famine. It cannot be thought therefore, that they abominated all shepherds in general, but only such shepherds that were foreigners, and for what reason it was that they did this, is not so easy a matter to resolve. Some are of opinion, that shepherds were held in detestation, because they were a people, in those days, addicted to robbery, which made them very odious to the Egyptians; but others imagine that theft, among the Egyptians, was not reputed so abominable a crime; and therefore they think, that the most probable reason of this aversion to shepherds, and to the Hebrews, as such, was the great oppression, and tyranny, under which they had lately grouned, when the Phœnician shepherds penetrated Egypt, wasted their cities, burnt their temples, murdered the inhabitants, and seated themselves, for a considerable while, in the possession of it. But, upon whatever account it was that the Egyptians had this aversion to shepherds, it certainly was an instance of Joseph's great modesty and love of truth, that he was not ashamed of an employment so mean in itself, and so vile in the eyes of the Egyptians. Stackhouse.—From the fragments of the ancient historian Manetho, preserved in Josephus and Africanus, it appears that that country had been invaded by a colony of Nomades or shepherds, descended from Cush, who established themselves there, and had a succession of kings. After many wars between them and the Egyptians, in which some of their principal cities were burnt and great cruelties were committed, they were compelled to evacuate the country; but not till they had been in possession of it for a period of nine hundred years. This alone was sufficient to render shep-herds odious to the Egyptians; but they were still more obnoxious, because they killed and ate those were accounted most sacred among them animals, particularly the sheep and the ox, which Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology

Taking therefore five of the most graceful persons of his brethren, he went and acquainted Pharaoh that his father and family were arrived in Goshen, and presented the five he had brought with him to the king, who treated them respectfully for Joseph's sake; and demanding what they were bred to, they, according to their instructions, answered, that they were shepherds, and humbly begged leave to settle in Goshen. The king, turning to Joseph, told him, 'The whole land is at thy disposal, place them in the best part of it, in Goshen, if they like that best; and if there be any among them of extraordinary skill in their way, let them have the care and management of my cattle.'

Joseph's project thus happily succeeding, he introduces his father to the king, whom Jacob reverently salutes. king, graciously condescending to talk with him, inquires his age; who tells him he was an hundred and thirty years old, though his ancestors had lived to a greater

Then taking leave of Pharaoh, Joseph placed his father and his brethren in Rameses, a city afterwards of Goshen, which was the most fertile part of Egypt, where he nourished them, and provided for them according to their families, with that care and tenderness, as if they had been his children.

Good old Israel and his family being thus happily disposed, Joseph returns to his charge. And now the famine increasing, people from all parts of Egypt and Canaan repair to Joseph, who furnished them with provisions as long as their money held out; by which means he had collected all the money in the land, and brought it into the king's exchequer. And when their money failed, they brought their cattle, and he gave them bread in exchange for them.

were accounted most sacred among them .- See

Thus they went on till the sixth* year, and then the famine pressed them so hard that they were forced to lay their condition before him, telling him that their money was spent, and he having got their cattle already, they had now nothing left to offer him but their bodies and lands, which they besought him in pity to accept, or else they must perish.

Joseph took them at their word, and in the king's name, and for his use, bought all the land of Egypt, except the land of the priests, who, having an allowance from the king, were not compelled to part with their possessions. But the rest of the Egyptians sold their estates; and thus the land became entirely the king's.

* This generally is translated the second year; but it must not be understood to be the second year of the seven years of famine, but the second from the time that their money failed, which was indeed the sixth of the seven, Gen. xlvii. 18.

Then Joseph, repeating the condition of the bargain, tells them: 'Behold, I have this day bought both you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. But upon these terms shall you hold your land: ye shall every year give the fifth part of your increase to Pharaoh, and the other four parts shall be your own for seed, and for food for yourselves and families.'

Thus Joseph settled it a standing law all over Egypt, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part of the yearly increase of the lands, except the lands of the priests. As for common people, Joseph removed them from the places of their constant abode to a greater distance, whereby they in time knew not where to claim.§

Thus the Egyptians saved their lives at the loss of their estate and liberties, and of freemen became bondmen; in which condition they yet rejoiced, and gratefully acknowledged Joseph's care, calling him their preserver: and to show how willingly they submitted to these terms, which the sons of liberty and property would inveigh against as insupportable, to assure their prince, notwithstanding this, of their duty and loyalty, they unanimously cry out to Joseph, 'Let us find favour in thy sight,' that those conditions may be ratified, 'and we will be the king's servants.'

The seven years of famine were succeeded by plentiful and seasonable years, the earth resuming its former fertility, and the whole land abounding in all the usual productions of nature. Twelve of these years of plenty Jacob lived to see: at the end of which nature's lamp grew dim, and near extinguished in him; his decayed spirits warn him of approaching fate, and

⁺ Why Pharaoh, when he thought fit to lessen the property of his common subjects, did not, at the same time, attempt to reduce the exorbitant riches of the priests, we may, in some measure, account for, if we consider, that, according to the constitution of the kingdom, the Egyptian priests were obliged to provide all sacrifices, and to bear all the charges of the national religion, which, in those days, was not a little expensive; so very expensive, that we find in countries where the soil was not fruitful, and consequently the people poor, men did not well know how to bear the burden of religion; and therefore Lycurgus, when he reformed the Lacedemonian state, instituted sacrifices, the meanest and cheapest that he could think of. But Egypt, we know, was a rich and fertile country, and therefore, in all probability, the king and people being desirous that religion should appear with a suitable splendour, made settlements upon the priests from the very first institution of government among them, answerable to the charges of their function. Add to this, that the priests of Egypt were the whole body of the nobility of the land; that they were the king's counsellors and assistants, in all the affairs which concerned the public; were joint agents with him in some things, and, in others, his directors and instructors. Add again, that they were the professors and cultivators of astronomy, geometry, and other useful sciences; that they were the keepers of the public registers, memoirs, and chronicles of the kingdom; and, in a word, that, under the king, they were the supreme magistrates, and filled all prime offices of honour and trust; and, considering them under these views, we may possibly allow, that Pharaoh might think that they had not too much to support the station they were to act in, and, for that reason, ordered that no tax should be raised upon them .- Stackhouse.

[†] This being the last year of the seven barren years, they might sow in hope of plenty again.

§ This Joseph probably did, with intent, that

by so displacing and unsettling them from their ancient seats and demesnes, and shifting them to and fro, one upon another's land, but leaving none upon their own, he might the better confirm Pharaoh's title to the whole. Besides, this changing of habitations showed they had nothing of their own, but received all of the king's bounty.

death.

He therefore sends to his son Joseph, and obliges him by an oath to bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers,* which Joseph swears to do. Upon this Jacob bowed himself to God, who, besides all his other mercies, had given him a fresh assurance by Joseph's promise and oath, that he should be carried out of Egypt into the promised land.

Joseph leaving his father entirely satisfied in the assurance he had given him, returns home; but is soon recalled by the sad message of his sickness. Whereupon he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to visit him.

The feeble patriarch summoneth all his spirits, and exerts them so far as to sit up in his bed to receive his favourite son. And when Joseph came near him, he recounted to him the promise which God had made to him of the land of Canaan;+

+ Perhaps Joseph might not know of this before, he having been separated from his father's

family when he was but a boy.

each drooping faculty beats an alarm of 'God Almighty,' said he, 'appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me; and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed for an everlasting possession.'

[Book I.

Then taking Joseph's two sons into a peculiar participation of this promise, he adopted them as his own immediate offspring; as for Ephraim and Manasseh, says he, they shall be mine, so as to become each of them head of a distinct tribe in Israel, and to enjoy the privilege of primogeniture in right of their father Joseph, to whom the birthright was transferred from Reuben, because of his incestuous transgression against his father. as for the issue thou shalt beget after them, they shall be thine, and shall be called by the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And going on, he gave Joseph a short account of the death and burial of Rachel his mother.

All this while that Jacob was talking with Joseph, concerning himself and his sons, he had not taken notice that Joseph's sons were with him, but spoke of them as if they had been absent; till turning to Joseph, and seeing somebody with him, though he could not well discern who they were, (for his eyes being dim with age, and the children standing between their father's knees, he could not distinguish them,) he asked, 'Who are these?' Joseph as piously as directly answers, 'They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place.'

Then Jacob bids him bring them near him, that he might bless them. And kissing and embracing them, said to Joseph, in a transport of joy, 'I was out of hopes of ever seeing thy face again, and now God hath doubled that blessing; for he hath suffered me to live to see thee and thy children.'

Joseph, placing the children according to the order of their birth, had set Manasseh so as to receive the blessing of his

^{*} Though there be something of a natural desire in most men to be buried in the places where their ancestors lie, yet Jacob's aversion to have his remains deposited in Egypt seems to be more earnest than ordinary, or otherwise he would never have imposed an oath upon his sons, and charged them all, with his dying breath, not to suffer it to be done. For he very well knew, that had his body been buried in Egypt, his posterity, upon that very account, would have been too much wedded to the country ever to attempt the acquisition of the promised land; and therefore, to wean them from the thoughts of continuing in Egypt, and fix their minds and affections in Canaan, he ordered his body to be carried thither beforehand, in testimony that he died in full per-suasion of the truth of the promises which were given to him and his ancestors: nor was it inconvenient that future generations, after their return into Canaan, should have before their eyes the sepulchre of their forefathers, for a record of their virtues, and an incitement to the imitation of them. But the strongest motive of all for Jacob's desiring to be buried in Canaan-supposing that he foreknew that our Saviour Christ was to live and die, and with some others, rise again in that country-was, that he might be one of that blessed number; and it was indeed an ancient tradition in the church, that among those 'who came out of their graves after our Lord's resurrection,' Matth. xxvii. 53. the patriarch Jacob was one .- Poole's Annotations, and Bibliotheca Bibl.

his left, guiding his hand at the same time. you, and bring you again into the land of laid it upon the head of Ephraim, who was Joseph, as a distinguishing mark of my the younger, and his left upon Manasseh's love, I have given thee one portion above head; and he blessed Joseph in blessing thy brethren, which I took out of the his children, saying, 'God, before whom hand of the Amorite, with my bow, and my fathers Abraham and Isa did walk, with my sword.'s the God which fed me all my me-sume to my name be named on them,+ and the name of my fathers, and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Joseph was uneasy that his father laid his right hand (which carried with it the preference) on the head of the youngest; and supposing it had been done through inadvertency, he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's to Manasseh's head, saying, 'Not so, my father; for this is the first-born, therefore put thy right hand upon his head.'

But Israel, actuated by divine direction, refused, saying, 'I know it, my son, I know it. He also shall become a people, and shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his posterity shall become a multitude.'

Then adding to his former blessing, he said, 'In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh;'t still setting Ephraim before Manasseh.

Then finding himself grow weaker he said to Joseph: 'I am now near my end;

father's right hand, and Ephraim that of but though I leave you, God shall be with But Israel stretching out his right hand, your fathers. And as for thee, my dear

The conversation hitherto was private, this day, and the Angel* which redeemed between Jacob and Joseph only; but findme from all evil, bless the lads. And let ing his end very near, he called for all his sons together, that while he had strength to deliver his mind, he might take his farewell of them, and not only distribute his blessings among them, but foretell what should befall them and their posterity in after times. Then directing his speech to them severally, he begins thus to the eldest:-

> Reuben, thou art my first-born, the prime of my strength, and by right of primogeniture wast born to many privileges and prerogatives, in superiority over thy brethren, and in power from the double inheritance annexed in course to the birthright: but these thou hast forfeited by defiling thy father's bed. |

Simeon in course is next; ** but he is

When Jacob heard that Reuben had lain with Bilhah, his concubinary wife, Gen. xxxv. 22, the text says that he took no farther notice of it then; but now at his death he reproaches him severely with it, and gives it as the reason for which he deprived him of the privileges of primogeniture.

** Reuben having forfeited his right of primo-

[§] Since Jacob was so peaceable a man, that he never, as we read of, engaged in any martial en-terprise, it may be inquired, how and when he took this portion of land, which he here gave to Joseph, from the Amorite with his sword and bow, or by force of arms? Some refer it to that act of Simeon and Levi, in destroying the inhabitants of Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. But that cannot be; for, first, Jacob disavowed that act, and blamed them for it both then and now, Gen. xlvi. 5, 6, 7. Secondly, those people of Shechem, whom they slew. were not Amorites, but Hivites, descended from Hivi the sixth son of Canaan, Gen. x. 17. whereas the Amorites came from the fourth son of Canaan, ver. 16. Others take these words of Jacob to be spoken in a prophetic sense; foretelling what he in his posterity should do: and through assurance of faith looking upon it as done, undertook to dispose of a double portion (appendant to the birthright of Joseph, on whom he had conferred the birthright) to be possessed on his posterity.

^{*} That is, Christ, who is called the Angel or Messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1.

⁺ That is, let them be reckoned into our family, equally with the rest of my sons.

[†] That is, when any of the people of Israel shall bless their children, they shall say, 'Be thou mul-tiplied as Ephraim and Manasseh are multiplied.' From hence it was the custom in Israel, that children should be brought to men eminent for piety, that they might bless them, and pray over them: thus they brought their children to Jesus. But when a blessing was given by imposition of hands, if it was to a son, he that blessed said, 'God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh;' if it was to a daughter, 'God make thee as Sarah and Rebekah.'

joined with Levi, for that wicked combination between them, in the massacre of Hamor and his people. Of these therefore Jacob says, that they were brethren in iniquity: 'Instruments of cruelty were in their habitations: O my soul come not into their secret; let not my honour be united to their assemblies; for in their anger they slew a man,* and in their cruel rage they digged down a wall: + cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel.' Thus did Jacob set forth their offence in very aggravating circumstances, to which he pronounces a sentence proportionate, 'I will divide them in Jacob, ‡ and scatter them in Israel.'

Jacob, having treated his three eldest sons with some severity, softens his style when he comes to Judah; § whose name

geniture, it might be expected that it should have devolved upon Simeon, who was next: but for his cruelty to Joseph and the idolatry of his tribe in worshipping Baal-peor, Numb. xxv. the priesthood, which was the nobler dignity of the primogeniture, was transferred to Levi, the third son; and the kingdom, the other part of the primogeniture, to Judah.

* This is, by the figure synecdoche, put for all the inhabitants of Shechem.

† Meaning the destroying and spoiling the city.
† This dividing may be applied to Simeon, whose tribe had not a distinct lot assigned them in Canaan, as the other tribes had; but they were thrust within the lot of Judah, Josh. xix. I. until in the time of Hezekiah king of Judah, a party of them smote the remainder of Amalek, and seating themselves in their possessions, I Chron. iv. 24. were thereby divided from the rest of their own tribe. As for the tribe of Levi, it was scattered through all the tribes, having no peculiar lot or share of the land as the other tribes had.

§ His mother Leah, Gen. xxix. 35. at his birth gave him that name, in gratitude and thankfulness to God. But now his father calls him so for another reason, alluding to the praise his brethren should give him; and that for many reasons; viz. I. The tribe of Judah was the first that entered the Red sea after Moses. 2. After the death of Joshua, the tribe of Judah was pitched upon to be commander in chief of all the other tribes, in their wars, Judg. i. 3. From this tribe sprang the mighty and powerful king David, his son king Solomon, and several other kings till the Babylonish captivity. 4. This tribe waged war against the Ishmaelites, Idumeans, Moabites, Arabians, and other neighbouring nations. 5. From this tribe descended Zerubbabel, that commanded the people in their return from Babylon. 6. And lastly, from this tribe sprang Christ.

signifying praise, it led him to a high encomium of him.

'Judah,' said he, 'thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise for thy strength and courage. Thou shalt put thy enemies to flight; thou shalt pursue them, lay hold of them, and destroy them: thy father's children shall bow down before thee.' | And then, wrapped up in the contemplation of Judah's strength and glory, he breaks forth into these elegant allegories; 'Judah is like a lion's whelp. From the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall dare to rouse him? Then describing the duration of his government; 'The sceptre,' said he, 'shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver be wanting of his issue, till the Messiah come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.'. Then pursuing his allegories, to set forth the prosperity and plenty of Judah's tribe, and the abundant fruitfulness of its soil, he added, 'Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:' signifying that wine should with them be as plentiful as water.

Jacob, keeping still in Leah's line, passes by Issachar and takes Zebulun; whose name signifying *Dwelling*, he only says of him, that he shall dwell at the haven for ships, and his border shall be an haven for ships, and his border shall be unto Zidon.**

By this, though the birthright was transferred from Reuben to Joseph, 1 Chron. v. 1. with respect to the double portion: yet that part of the prerogative of primogeniture, which concerned authority, or government over the rest, is plainly conferred on Judah; and so it is explained here, 1 Chron. v. 2. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, though the birthright was Joseph's with respect to the inheritance.

[¶] Here are gradually described by the lion's age, the three degrees of the state of this tribe of Judah. The first, its infancy under Joshua; the second, its virile state under David; the third, its confirmed state under Solomon.

^{* *} Accordingly this lot came forth, Josh. xix, 11.

Coming next to Issachar, he compares him to a strong ass couching down between two burdens; seated in a pleasant and fertile country; but being naturally slothful and pusillanimous, loved an inglorious ease more than active liberty and bravery.

The good old patriarch having gone through with Leah's offspring, he takes the handmaids' sons next, beginning with Dan, son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid. Dan signifying judying, he said, 'Dan shall judge his people,* as one of the tribes of Israel;' that is, though it was smaller, yet should bear as much authority as another. That it should be like a snake on the way,† or an adder in the path, which bites the horses' heels, and makes them throw their riders. Here Jacob cried out, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.'‡

When he spake of Gad, alluding also to his name, he said, 'A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at last.' By which he is thought to have referred to what was afterwards performed by Jephthah, who was of this tribe.

Of happy Asher he foretells, his bread shall be rich, and kings should reckon it a dainty; which denoted the exuberant richness of soil.

* This was fulfilled in Samson, yet was no more than Issachar did by Tola, Judg. x. 1. But it is supposed the reason why this was said of Dan, was to show that the sons of the handmaids, of which Dan is the first named, though as born of bond-women, they were in that respect inferior to the rest of their brethren, should notwithstanding obtain some share in the government.

† This seems to intimate that the Danites should prevail more by policy and stratagem, than by open force: which Samson's dealing with the Philistines, Judges chap. xiv. and xv. and the Danites taking

Laish, chap. xviii. confirms.

'Naphtali,' says he, 'shall be like a tree having grafts, shooting out pleasant branches in its generation.'

And now he comes to his beloved Joseph, on whom he expatiates very largely, thinking he cannot say enough of him.

'Joseph,' says he, 'is like a fruitful bough of a tree planted near a spring, whose branches run over the wall.'

And having thus set forth his future greatness in his posterity, he looks back and recollects his past troubles.

'The archers, ¶ said he, 'have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode strong, and his hands and arms were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. From thence is the Shepherd, the stone ** of

§ The versions generally confound the animals that the scripture speaks of, or transform them into other things, and sometimes trees or plants into animals. Thus here in Gen. xlix. 21. they make Jacob, prophesying of the tribe of Naphtali, say, 'Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words.' Interpreters differ in nothing so much as this, even those that are for it, confounding their own opinion. The learned Bochart translates the words of the original thus: 'Naphtali shall be like a tree having grafts, shooting out pleasant branches. -This seems to be most rational and natural, not only from the words, but from the sense; if we consider that Jacob compares this tribe to a tree, as he does that of Joseph in the following verses, and as good men are often compared to fine trees, Psal. i. 3., and xcii. 12. either because of their fruitfulness, Naphtali having brought but four children to Egypt, Gen. xlvi. 24. which in less than 215 years produced more than fifty thousand, Num. i. 42.; or upon the account of the fruitfulness of the country, which fell to their lot, which Moses and Josephus represent as the richest of all

By this rhetorical amplification Jacob sets forth the strength of Joseph's family, and the large extent of his twofold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh, which at the first numbering of the tribes yielded of men able to go forth to war threescore and twelve thousand and seven hundred men, Num. And at the second numbering, fourscore, five thousand and two hundred, Num. xxvi.; far exceeding any other tribe.

¶ Amongst these archers, his brethren may undoubtedly claim the first place: for they are expressly said to have hated him, Gen. xxxvii. 4. and to have conspired his death, ver. 18 and afterwards to have sold him, ver. 28. Next to them his lewd mistress, and, by her means, his master Potiphar, may be reckoned among these archers that sorely grieved him.

** So the last English translation has it, making

[†] Modern interpreters are very ridiculously fanciful in the application of this text, distorting it to the most extravagant and contrary meanings. There being no context to make it out, it looks more like a recommendatory ejaculation on the death-bed. But if we suppose something more than ordinary impressed the patriarch's spirit at this time, might he not have some sense or foresight of the mischief the Danites afterwards brought upon themselves, when having rifled Micah's house, and robbed him of his gods, they fell into open idolatry?

the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb."

Then adding, 'The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.'+ And then to centre them all in Joseph, he says, 'They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of him that was separated from his brethren.'

Jacob concludes with Benjamin, his youngest son, of whom he said, 'Benjamin shall be ravenous as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey and at night he shall divide the spoil;' in which words he as aptly as briefly foretells the fierce and cruel nature of that tribe, exemplified, among other instances, in that of the Levite's concubine, Judg. xix. 20, 21.

The good old patriarch, having delivered himself thus to his sons, gives them his blessing, not according to his own natural affection or inclination, but according to the divine direction then given him; and putting them in mind of his death, says, 'I am going to be gathered to my people,

Israel; to which thou wast advanced by I charge you bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite:' which, that they might not mistake, he further describes thus: 'In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. And to engage them the more to perform his will in this, he tells them, 'There Abraham and Sarah his wife were buried; and there Isaac and Rebekah his wife were buried; and there I buried Leah.' And to assure them of their right to that burying-place, he tells them further, 'That the field and the cave therein were purchased not only of Ephron, but of the children of Heth.'

> Having thus given his last charge to his sons concerning his funeral, he laid his feet on the bed and quietly expired.‡

> The loss of so good a father must undoubtedly be very afflicting to so numerous a family, whose chief support depended on the piety of him; yet we find none of Jacob's sons that paid the least demonstrations of filial affection and duty with so much devotion as the pious Joseph. could not see his aged parent's face, though dead, without kissing, and bathing it with his tears. And having thus given vent to his passion, he commanded his servants the physicians to embalm him; § which

the Shepherd and Stone synonymous. That of 1610 reads it, 'of whom was the feeder appointed by the Stone of Israel: 'taking the Stone to be Christ, and the shepherd or feeder appointed by him to be Joseph. But Tremellius and Junius make Joseph to be both the shepherd and the stone, viz. of refuge to Israel. There is an ellipsis, or defect in the sentence, which interpreters supply as they think best. However it be taken, undoubtedly Jacob had a regard to Joseph's constant resisting the assaults of his mistress, and patiently bearing the severity of his master, and likewise to his taking care of and feeding both Israel and the Egyptians and others, as a shepherd provides for his flock.

[.] These were terms comprehensive of all out-

ward blessings.

[†] Which is a term of duration commonly used in scripture: but Deut. xxxiii. 15. seems to explain this text more directly, where Moses' repeating this very blessing of Jacob on Joseph does not seem so much to regard the comparison of hills in respect of duration, as in point of blessing, which God more largely dispensed in hills and mountains.

[‡] Whilst Jacob was prophesying and blessing his sons, he sat on the bed, his feet hanging down; but when he had done talking to them and taken his leave of them, he gathered his feet into the bed, and departed.

[§] The manner of embalming among the Egyptians, according to Herodotus, Diodorus, and others, was as follows. When a man died, his body was carried to the artificer, whose business it was to make coffins. The upper part of the coffin represented the person who was to be put in it, whether man or woman; and (if a person of distinction) was generally adorned with such paintings and embellishments as were suitable to its quality. When the body was brought home again, they agreed with the embalmers; but, according to the quality of the person, the prices were different. The highest was a talent, that is, about three hundred pounds sterling; twenty minæ was a moderate one; and the lowest a very small matter. As the body lay extended, one of them, whom they

accordingly they did. And when the usual time of mourning was over, Joseph entreated some of Pharaoh's courtiers (for as he was a mourner, it was not proper for him to appear in his presence) to acquaint him, that his father just before his death had obliged him by an oath to bury him in the sepulchre of their family in the land of Canaan; and therefore to beg leave of the king for him to go and bury his father, upon promise to come again. The king readily consents, and Joseph sets forward, attended not only with his own and his father's family, but with the chief officers of the household and nobility, who, to honour Joseph, and grace the funeral, would bear him company, partaking in all the solemnity performed to the memory of his deceased father.*

called the designer, marked out the place, on the left side, where it was to be opened, and then a dissector, with a very sharp Egyptian stone, made the incision, through which they drew all the intestines, except the heart and kidneys, and then washed them with palm-wine, and other strong and binding drugs. The brains they drew through the nostrils with a hooked piece of iron, made particularly for that purpose, and filled the skull with astringent drugs. The whole body they anointed with oil of cedar, with myrrh, cinnamon, and other drugs, for about thirty days, by which means it was preserved entire, without so much as losing its hair, and sweet, without any signs of putrefaction. After this, it was put into salt about forty days; and therefore when Moses says, that forty days were employed in embalming Jacob, Gen, l. 3. he must mean the forty days of his continuing in the salt of nitre, without including the thirty days that were spent in the other operations above mentioned; so that, in the whole, they mourned seventy days in Egypt, as Moses likewise observes. Last of all, the body was taken out of this salt, washed, and wrapped up in linen swaddling-bands dipped in myrrh, and rubbed with a certain gum, which the Egyptians used instead of glue, and so returned to the relations, who put it into the coffin, and kept it in some repository in their houses, or in it in 0 s 194 e | 12 titizala ly for the t purpose—Calmet and Warourton.

* The splendour and magnificence of our patriarch's funeral seem to be without a parallel in history. The noble obsequies of Marcellus comparest in comparison; but how do even these fall short of the simple narrative before us! For what are the six hundred beds, for which the Roman solemnities on that occasion were so famous, in comparison of this national itinerant multitude, which swelled like a flood, and moved like a river; to 'all Pharaoh's servants, to the elders of his

After some travel they came to the thrashing-floor of Atad,† where they made a halt; and Joseph made a solemn mourning for his father seven days together. The Canaanites who inhabited the land, seeing the Egyptians mix themselves in these obsequies, were amazed, and thinking they had the greatest concern in this funeral lamentation, could not forbear saying, 'This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians:' from whence the name of that place was called Abel-Mizraim, that is, 'the Mourning of the Egyptians.'

This solemnity being ended, they went on; and being come to the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought for a burying-place, they buried Jacob in the cave there; and having thus performed Jacob's will they all returned to Egypt.

So long as Jacob lived, Joseph's brethren knew themselves secure; but now their father was dead, their former fear returned, and suggested to them the just revenge Joseph might take of them for the former miseries they had occasioned to him. Wherefore they consulted together how to depreciate their offence; which they soon agreed upon, and made their dead father, whose memory they knew was very dear to pious Joseph, their advocate; and framing a message in Jacob's name, they sent it to their brother in these words: 'Thy father commanded us before he died, saying, Thus shall ye say to Joseph; Forgive I pray thee now the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did evil unto thee: and pardon them, not only for my sake, but because they are the servants of the God of thy father.'

This message was artfully worded; for

house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, it at is, to the officers of his household, and deputies of his provinces, with all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house, conducting their solemn sorrow for near two hundred miles into a distant country.—Bibliotheca Bibl.

+ It is uncertain whether Atad be the name of

⁺ It is uncertain whether Atad be the name of a place or of a man; the thrashing-floor was probably not far from Hebron.—Dr Wells.

they, fearing that the supposed request of give to the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, their dying father might not be prevailing enough now he was dead, made God their intercessor. But there was no need of such moving arguments to Joseph's compassionate temper; their diffidence of his good-nature is as afflicting now as their offence was formerly to him. He wept at the delivery of the message; and sending for them, they falling down at his feet in the most abject manner, he tenderly dismisses their fears, and comforts them: 'Revenge,' says he, 'belongs to God, and I forgive you. For though you designed ill against me, yet God turned it to good, making me, through your malice, an instrument under him to save much people alive, and you especially, as is now evident. Therefore fear no hurt from me; for I will protect and cherish you and your families.'

Thus the pious Joseph dismissed his brethren, with the assurance that they should always find in him an affectionate brother, and a constant friend.

Joseph lived four and fifty years after his father's death, having the comfort of seeing himself the happy parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to the third generation.

And now finding himself near his end, he sent for his brethren," and said thus to them, 'My death is at hand; but though I leave you, yet God will surely remember you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware he would

and Jacob. I charge you, therefore, when God shall thus visit you, and bring you

out of this land, that you carry up my

+ It seems evident that coffins were not universally used in Egypt, and were only used for persons of eminence and distinction. It is also reasonable to believe that in times so remote as those of Joseph they might have been much less common than afterwards, and that consequently Joseph's being put in a coffin in Egypt might be mentioned with a design to express the great honours the Egyptians did him in death, as well as in life; being treated after the most sumptuous man-ner, embalmed, and put into a coffin. It is very probable that the chief difference was not in being with or without a coffin, but in the expensiveness of the coffin itself; some of the Egyptian coffins being made of granite, and covered all over with hieroglyphics, the cutting of which must have been done at a prodigious expense, both of time and money; the stone being so hard that we have no tools by which we can make any impression on it. Two of these are now in the British Museum, that appear to have belonged to some of the nobles of Egypt. They are dug out of the solid stone, and adorned with almost innumerable hieroglyphics One of these, vulgarly called Alexander's tomb, is ten feet three inches and a quarter long, ten inches thick in the sides, in breadth at bottom four feet two inches and a half, and three feet ten in depth, and weighs about ten tons. In such a coffin I suppose the body of Joseph was deposited; and such an one could not have been made and transported to Canaan at an expense that any private individual could bear. It was with incredible labour and at an extraordinary expense that the coffin in question was removed the distance of but a few miles, from the ship that brought it from Egypt, to its present residence in the British Museum. Judge, then, at what an expense such a coffin must have been digged, engraved, and transported over the desert from Egypt to Causan, a distance of three hundred miles! We need not be surprised to hear of carriages and horsemen, a very great company, when such a coffin was to be carried so far, with a suitable company to attend it .- Dr A. Clarke.

hones with you.'

This eminent patriarch, having thus bound his brethren by oath to convey his remains to his native land, departs this life; and they, in compliance with his injunction, embalmed his body, and reserved it in a coffin,+ till the prediction was ful-

^{*} By brethren we are not to understand the other eleven sons of Jacob, who, except Benjamin. being all older than himself, might probably be all or most of them dead; but it must here be meant of the heads of their families: for in the scripture dialect all near kinsmen go under the general appellation of brethren, as Abraham called Lot, Gen. xiii. 8. and ch. xxiv. 27.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK II.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ISRAELITES' OPPRESSION IN EGYPT TO THE DEATH OF MOSES.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

ONE of the great mysteries in the dispensations of Providence, is God's making choice of the children of Israel for his peculiar people, when it is so manifest, as Moses plainly tells them, that they were a stiff-necked nation, and 'had been rebellious from the very first day that he knew them.' 'God will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom he will show mercy.' But, upon supposition that the children of Israel did not behave so well during their abode in Egypt, that they neglected the worship of the true God, and complied too much with the idolatrous customs of the country; this will afford us reason enough why (lod might suffer their sorrows to be multiplied, 'and their enemies to ride over their backs.' 'He does not indeed afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;' and therefore, we may presume, that this severe chastisement of his rod was to make them smart for some great and national defection; was to remind them of their sad degeneracy from the virtue of their ancestors; and so-in the language of the prophet--- 'to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged;

to look unto Abraham their father, and unto Sarah that bare them.' But even putting the case, that they had not been thus culpable; yet, since 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,' who can say, but that God might justly permit such calamities to befall a people whom he had adopted for his own, the more to exercise their virtue and patience, and resignation to the divine will; the more to keep up a distinction between them and the Egyptians, which a friendly usage might have destroyed; the more to prepare, and make them willing to leave Egypt, whenever God should send them an order to depart; and the more to heighten the relish or their future deliverance, and to make them more thankful, more obedient to him and his injunctions, upon every remembrance of that 'house of bondage,' wherein they had suffered so much, and been so long detained?

Of all the writers of the histories of their own times, there is none to be compared to Moses in this respect, that, as well as faithfully detailing the infirmities of God's chosen people, he reveals his own faults and blemishes, which he might have easily concealed, and conceals many things, recorded in other authors, which might have redounded to his own immortal, be fond to emblazon, and discovers others honour. He might have concealed the near consanguinity between his father and mother, which in after-ages made marriages unlawful, though then perhaps it might be dispensed with. He might have concealed his murder of the Egyptian, and, for fear of apprehension, his escape into Midian. He might have concealed his aversion to the office of rescuing his brethren from their bondage; the many frivolous excuses he made, and the flat denial he gave God at last, 'till God was in a manner forced to obtrude it upon him. He might have concealed his neglect in not circumcising his son, which drew God's angry resentment against him, so that he met him, and would have slain him. He might have concealed some peevish remonstrances he made to God, when Pharaoh proved obstinate and refused to comply. Above all, he might have concealed the whole story of the magicians, their working three miracles equally with him, and every other circumstance that seemed to eclipse his glory; but, instead of this, we may observe, that as he makes a large chasm in his life from his childhood to his being forty years old, and from forty to fourscore, so he has left us nothing of the incomparable beauty and comeliness of his person; nothing of the excellency of his natural parts, and politeness of his education; nothing of his Ethiopian expedition, the conquests he made there, and the posts of honour which he held in the Egyptian court; nothing, indeed, of all the transactions of the preceding part of his life, but what the author to the Hebrews has taken care to transmit, namely, 'that when he came to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' So that here we have a signal evidence of the truth and honesty of our historian, that in the passages of his own life he conceals such as an impostor would

which any man of art and design would be careful to conceal.*

CHAPTER I.

A new king succeeding to the Egyptian throne, soon after the death of Joseph, the Israelites are grievously oppressed .- The king's orders to destroy the male children is not obeyed .-Moses is born, and brought up by Pharaoh's daughter .- Avenges the cause of his brethren. -Is appointed shepherd to Jethro .- God appears to him, and appoints him to a special embassy to the king of Egypt.

UNHAPPILY for the Israelites, who were strangers in the land of Egypt; they had not long lost Joseph, who was their succour and support, before a new king succeeded to the throne, who, regarding them with a jealous eye, and fearing their power and influence, as they were become very wealthy by means of their brother, summoned a council, and laid before them the absolute necessity of checking these strangers in their fortunate career.

The council unanimously agreed, with their jealous prince, in the expedient he proposed, which was to employ them in making bricks, and building store-cities for Pharaoh.

To gratify their avarice as well as cruelty, they proposed not to reap the profits of their service, but by continual hard labour to impoverish their spirits, and enfeeble their bodies: therefore they set taskmasters to oversee and keep them to hard labour, by which, and other servile work, they made their lives very uncomfortable.+

^{*} Stackhouse.

⁺ Philo, in his life of Moses, tells us, that they were made to carry burdens above their strength, and to work night and day; that they were forced, at the same time, to be workers and servers both; that they were employed in brickmaking, digging, and building; and that if any of them dropped down dead under their burdens, they were not suffered to be buried. Josephus, in his Jewish Antiquities, tells us, in like manner, that they were compelled to learn several laborious trades, to build walls round cities, to dig

But God supported them under their severities; for the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more they grew and multiplied, which increased their jealousy to a greater degree of cruelty, insomuch that the king, to suppress their growth, spoke to two of the Hebrew midwives,* Shiphrah and Puah, and gave them a strict charge, that when they should be called to do their office to the Hebrew women, if the child were a son, they should kill him; but if a daughter, that she should live.†

trenches and ditches, to drain rivers into channels, and cast up dykes and banks to prevent inundations. And not only so, but that they were likewise put upon the erection of fantastical pyramids, which were vast piles of building, raised by the kings of Egypt, in testimony of their splendour and magnificence, and to be the repositories of their bodies, when dead. Thus, by three several ways the Egyptians endeavoured to bring the Israelites under: by exacting a tribute of them, to lessen their wealth; by laying heavy burdens upon them, to weaken their bodies; and by preventing, by this means, as they imagined, their generating and increasing.

* The critics very needlessly, and with more subtilty than solidity, controvert who these midwives were? and whether they were Hebrews or Egyptians? Without doubt they were Hebrews; and by the king of Egypt's application to them, the most celebrated of their profession.

† Josephus tells us, that there was a certain scribe (as they called him) a man of great credit for his predictions, who told the king, that there was a Hebrew child to be born about that time, who would be a scourge to the Egyptians, and advance the glory of his own nation, and, if he lived to grow up, would be a man eminent for virtue and courage, and make his name famous to posterity; and that, by the counsel and instigation of this scribe it was, that Pharaoh gave the midwives orders to put all the Hebrew male children to death.-For this distinction in his barbarity the king might have several reasons. As, 1. To have destroyed the females with the males had been an unnecessary provocation and cruelty, because there was no fear of the women's joining to the king's enemies, and fighting against him. 2. The daugh-ters of Israel exceeded very much their own women in beauty, and all advantages of person; and therefore their project might be, to have them preserved for the gratification of their lust. Philo tells us that they were preserved to be married to the slaves of the Egyptian lords and gentry, that children descended from them might be slaves even by birth. But suppose they were married to free-men, stey could have no children but such as would he half Egyptians, and in time be wholly ingrafted into that nation. But 3. Admitting they married not at all, yet as the female sex among the Hebrews

But these pious women, fearing the displeasure of the almighty King, rather than that of an earthly potentate, notwithstanding the strict injunction, preserved the male children; for which Pharaoh sends for them, and in great displeasure reprimands their neglect of his edict. In excuse for which they tell him, that the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are like wild beasts, ‡ delivered before the midwives could come to them.

The piety of the midwives in preserving the male children was so acceptable to God, that he is said thereupon to deal well with the midwives; and because they feared God, he made them houses.§ And by this means the people multiplied, and grew mighty.

The king, whether satisfied or not with this answer of the midwives, not finding it safe to trust them any longer, resolved upon a more effectual method to extirpate the Hebrews; and therefore he gave charge to all his people, that every son that should be born to the Hebrews should be thrown into the river.

This cruel edict for drowning all the male children must needs be very afflicting

made a very considerable figure in Egypt for their sense and knowledge, the care of their families, and application to business, and for their skill and dexterity in many accomplishments, that were much to be valued for the use and ornament of life, such as the distaff and the loom, dying, painting, embroidering, &c. such women as these would make excellent servants and domestics for the Egyptian ladies, who had no relish of spending their time any other way than in idleness and pleasure.—Jewish Antiq. and Bibliotheca Bibl.

‡ The Hebrew word Chajoth, which is the

‡ The Hebrew word *Chajoth*, which is the original, signifies not only animals in general, but beasts, and even wild beasts, as has been observed by learned men, and may be seen in several places of scripture.

§ That is, he made them to prosper, gave them children, and blessed their families; the word house being usually in scripture taken for the

offspring or family of any one.

This inhuman edict is supposed by commentators, to be so abhorred by the Egyptians, that they scarce ever put it in execution; and that it was recalled immediately after the death of Amenopthis, then king of Egypt, who enacted it; which time Eusebius and others place in the fourth year of Moses.

to the Hebrew parents, and put them upon many a thoughtful contrivance to preserve their infants; of which an instance
soon followed; for one Amram of the
house of Levi, having married a daughter
of the same family, named Jochebed, had
by her a daughter, whose name was Miriam, and four years after a son, whom they
called Aaron. About three years after
Aaron's birth Jochebed was delivered of
another son, who being a child of most
elegant beauty, something supernatural
and divine appearing in his form, his
mother was the more solicitous for his
preservation.

Having kept him concealed in her house three months, but not being able any longer to hide him, and fearing he might fall into the hands of those that were appointed to drown the male children, she contrived a way to save him, by making a little boat of bulrushes, * which she daubed with pitch and slime, to keep the water out; and putting the child into it, she laid it among the flags, by the river side, and set his sister Miriam at a distance to observe what became of him.

But the providence of God soon interposed in behalf of the helpless infant: for Thermuthis,† Pharaoh's only daughter, coming to the river to bathe lerself, her maids looking for a retirement for that purpose, discovered the boat, with the child in it, which Thermuthis commanding them to bring to her, she no sooner uncovered the child, but it made its mournful complaint to her in a flood of tears.

This unexpected accident, and the extraordinary beauty of the child, moved the Egyptian princess with compassion, which she expressed in an accent of pity, saying to this effect: 'This is some Hebrew child, which the parents have hid to preserve him from the king's cruel edict.'

By this time Miriam, the child's sister, had thrust herself in amongst the attendants of the princess; and observing with what tenderness she looked upon the child, very officiously offered her service to procure an Hebrew nurse for him which the princess accepted; and the girl hastened away to her mother, and brought her to the place, where she received the child from the princess, who engaged to pay her for her care.

No doubt this was a welcome bargam to the mother, who, taking the child home with her, durst now nurse it openly, having a royal protection for his security.

When he was grown big enough his mother brought him to court to show him to the princess, and satisfy her how he had improved under her care. The princess grew so fond of him that she adopted him for her son; ‡ and in remembrance that she had drawn him out of the water, she called his name Moses; § and to accomplish him the more, she keeps him at court, where he is instructed in all the learning and discipline used among the

^{*} The bulrush here mentioned is the papyrus, for which the banks of the Nile were so celebrated; the inner rind of which was manufactured by the Egyptians into a substance for writing on, whence the word paper. Various ancient authors refer to the use of small canoes among the Egyptians, composed of interwoven bulrushes of this description overlaid with bitumen and pitch.—Patterson.

[†] So Josephus calls her; and from him Philo, who adds, that she was the king's only daughter and heir; and that being sometime married, but having no child, she pretended to be big with child and to be delivered of Moses; whom she owned as her natural son. Agreeable to which is what the apostle says, that when Moses was grown up,

he scorned to be thought the son of Pharaoh's daughter. From whence it is plain he was esteemed as such. And if any one should ask, why he did not in right of his mother succeed to the kingdom? It may reasonably be answered, that the fraud of his adopted mother and his own adoption being detected, he could pretend no right to the crown of Egypt.

[†] The Jews observe, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in scripture said to have begotten him. And thus it is said, that Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, though she had only taken care of his education.

[§] At his circumcision, says Clement Alexandrinus, his parents called him Joachim, (that is, the resurrection of the Lord,) from a presaging hope, that the Lord, through him, would raise up his people Israel, deliver them from the Egyptian bondage they were then in, and bring them again to the promised land.

all things requisite and becoming the character and quality of a prince of the blood. *

Moses being forty years old left the court, and went to see his brethren; and when he reflected on the oppression they laboured under, it affected him with compassion and indignation to see the servants of the most high God subjected to a servitude exceeding that of brutes. This was soon increased by an opportunity that just then offered; which was an Egyptian striking an Hebrew. This inflamed Moses's zeal, who, looking about to see whether any man was within sight, chastises the Egyptian, making him expiate his barbarity to the injured Hebrew with his blood; + and afterwards buried him in the sand; supposing by his taking upon him thus to administer justice, that his brethren would have understood, that

have the best and most liberal education that the whole world could at that time afford. - Stack-

Egyptians, both civil and military, and in | finding two men of the Hebrews quarrelling, he endeavoured to reconcile them, putting them in mind that they were brethren; and with some smartness reprehending the aggressor, he demanded for what reason he thus attacked the other? The fellow, thrusting him away with disdain, replies: 'Who made you a prince and judge over us? Do you intend to kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday? Moses was startled at this, and to prevent the fatal consequence that would attend, in reaching the ears of the king, he left Egypt, a circumstance that strongly proves his being immediately under the divine care; for Pharaoh soon heard of it, but Moses was fled from his dominions into the land of Midian.‡

God by his hand would have delivered them; but they understood him not. However, the next day he went out, and showed himself among them again; and * Besides the education which his own parents gave him, Philo acquaints us, that, from his Egyptian masters, he was taught arithmetic, geometry, physic, music, and hieroglyphics, otherwise called enigmatical philosophy; that from the Chaldeans he learned astronomy; from the Assyrians their character, or manner of writing; and from the Grecians all their liberal arts and sciences. But that was not a time for the Egyptians, who ex-celled the rest of the world in all sorts of learning, to send for masters from Greece, which rather stood in need of Egyptian teachers; for, to be learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (as St Stephen asserts of Moses, Acts vii. 22.) was to

[†] Some object, that it was very unreasonable for Moses to kill the Egyptian for only striking one of the Hebrews. In answer to this the Hebrews say, that the Hebrew whom the Egyptian struck was husband to one Salomith, a very beautiful woman whom the Egyptian had debauched. And that therefore Moses slew the Egyptian, not for striking the Hebrew, but for the adultery, which he discovered from them whilst they were quarrelling: some say, perhaps the Egyptian had almost killed the Hebrew, and that Moses could no other way than by force keep him off: or that the Egyptian attacked Moses, and so he was forced to kill him in his own defence.

[‡] Josephus, who has given us several particulars of Moses's life, which, in modesty perhaps, he might not think proper to record of himself, has assigned a farther reason for his leaving Egypt, of which it may not be improper, in this place, to give the reader this short abstract. "When Moses was grown to man's estate, he had an opportunity offered him of showing his courage and conduct. The Ethiopians, who inhabited the other land on the south side of Egypt, had made many dreadful incursions, plundered and ravished all the neighbouring parts of the country, beat the Egyptian army in a set battle, and were become so elated with their success, that they began to march to-wards the capital of Egypt. In this distress, the Egyptians had recourse to the oracle, which an-swered, that they should make choice of an Hebrew for their general. As none was more promising than Moses, the king desired his daughter to consent, that he should go, and head his army; but she, after having first expostulated with her father, how mean a thing it was for the Egyptians to implore the assistance of a man whose death they had been complotting, would not agree to it, until she had obtained a solemn promise upon oath, that no practices or attempts should be made upon his life. When Moses, upon the princess's persuasion, had at last accepted the commission, he made it his first care to come up with the enemy before they were aware of him; and, to this purpose, instead of marching up the Nile, as the custom was before, he chose to cross the country, though the passage was very dangerous, by reason of the poisonous flying serpents which infested those parts; but for this he had a new expedient. The bird ibis, though very friendly to every other creature, is a mortal enemy to all serpents; and therefore having got a sufficient number of these, he carried them along with him in cages, and as soon as he came to any dangerous places, he let them loose upon the serpents, and by their means. and protection, proceeding without any harm or molestation, he entered the enemy's country, took.

Here was the happy place, and then the blessed time when majesty, guarded only with rural innocence, submitted to the humble office of a shepherd, and a crook instead of a sceptre graced the peaceful monarch's hand. Here Jethro, first in quality both of prince and priest, enjoyed the blessings of a quiet reign, whose daughters laid aside the distinction of their birth to feed their father's flocks, and took more delight in the innocent and useful employment of tending their harmless sheep, than in the luxurious gaiety of a court.

In the plains of Midian there was a well common to all the natives of the place to water their cattle. Hitherto Moses directed his steps, as well to rest himself, as allay his thirst; where, whilst he was refreshing himself, the seven daughters of the prince of Midian (that is, Jethro, who was both priest and prince) came to draw water to fill the troughs to give their sheep; but some churlish shepherds, having a mind to serve their own turns first, came rudely and put the royal shepherdesses by. Moses seeing this, steps in to their relief; and, chastising the shepherds, made them fly.

several of their cities, and obliged them at last to retreat into Saba, the metropolis of Ethiopia. Moses sat down before it; but, as it was situate in an island, with strong fortifications about it, in all probability it would have cost him a longer time to carry it, had not Tharbis, the king of Ethiopia's daughter, who had the fortune once to see him from the walls behaving himself with the utmost gallantry, fallen in love with him. Where-upon she sent privately to let him know, that the city should be surrendered to him, upon condition that he would marry her immediately after. Moses agreed to the proposal; and having taken possession of the place, and of the princess, returned with his victorious army to Egypt. Here, instead of reaping the fruits of his great achievements, the Egyptians accused him of murder to the king, who, having already taken some umbrage at his valour and great reputation, was resolved to rid himself of him: but Moses, having some suspicion of it, made his escape, and not daring to go by the common roads, for fear of being stopped by the king's guards, was forced to pass through a great desert to reach the land of Midian,"—which place is generally supposed to have been in Arabia Petræa, on the eastern coast of the Red sea, not far from mount Sinai.

The frighted damsels returned to the wells, and Moses very officiously assists them in drawing water for their flocks: after which, they took their leave, and hasted home to give their father an account of the generosity of the stranger, who had protected them against the insults of the rustics. Jethro* hearing their story, and not seeing the person that had thus gallantly defended them, reprehends their ingratitude and incivility, asking what was become of the generous stranger? They told him they left him at the well: whereupon he bid them go and invite him home, where Moses was so pleased with their kind entertainment, that he expressed a willingness to take up his residence with them, and undertake the charge of their sheep. Jethro readily closed with the proposal, and to engage him the more to his interest, bestowed Zipporah, one of his daughters, upon him for a wife; by whom he had two sons, the eldest of whom he named Gershom, which signifies 'a stranger here:' for he said, 'I have been a stranger in a strange land;' and the younger he called Eliezer, importing, 'God my help:' 'For the God of my fa ther, said he, was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.'

Whilst Moses continued in Jethro's family, the king of Egypt died: but his successor proved no more favourable to the poor oppressed Hebrews; who changed their oppressor, but not their condition; the miseries of which rather increased than abated. In vain they appeal to the merciless tyrant, and his more cruel taskmasters, who lord it over them with unbounded severity.

But God, who saw the affliction of his people, and whose ears were open to receive their complaints, looked with an eye of compassion upon them; and the appointed time of their deliverance, which

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^{*} In Exod. ii. 18. he is called Reuel; so that either Reuel was his name as well as Jethro; or else Reuel was the father of Jethro, and therefore grandfather of these young women.

he in his secret providence had determined, being near, he began to think of preparing Moses for it, whom he intended to make use of as an instrument in the great work.

Whilst Moses kept his father-in-law's sheep, he one day led* them as far into the desert as Mount Horeb,† where the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. Moses was startled at the sight, but that which added to his admiration and roused his curiosity, was the continuance of the bush unconsumed, notwithstanding it was wholly encompassed with flames.‡

* Here we may observe the manner of those times and countries, that whereas the shepherds here drive their flocks before them, the shepherds there went before their flocks, and the flocks followed them. The oriental shepherd, to facilitate the management of his charge, gives names to his sheep, which answer to them, as dogs and horses answer to theirs in these parts of the world. The flocks in the island of Cyrnon ran off when a stranger approached them; but when the shepherd blew his horn, they immediately recognised the sound, and scampered towards the spot from whence it came. These curious customs our Lord beautifully applies to his own management, as the great Shepherd of his church: 'the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.'

† Which signifies forsaken, and is here, Exod.

† Which signifies forsaken, and is here, Exod. iii. I. called the mountain of God, by way of anticipation, both from the following appearance of God upon it, at this time, and his descending upon it afterwards, to give the law to his people, ch. xix. 20. where, though it is called Sinai, it is the same place with this, for St Stephen reciting this present passage in Acts vii. 30. calls it Mount Sinai.

† It is not unfitly observed, that the burning bush may represent the state of Israel at that time, who were entangled in the thorny bush of advertity, and encompassed with the fire of affliction, in which they were like to be consumed. It is also an emblem of the church, to which it may be compared on account of its weak, obscure, and contemptible state, in the esteem of worldly men, who are taken with nothing but what dazzles the eye of sense. For though there is a real glory, and a spiritual magnificence, in this holy society, she cannot compete with earthly kingdoms in outward splendour, any more than a bush in the wilderness can vie with a cedar in Lebanon: for besides the paucity of her true members, they are commonly to be found rather in smoky cottages than proud palaces; and sometimes they have been found in

This extraordinary circumstance made Moses consider it more attentively, and therefore said to himself, I will turn aside and see if I can discover the reason why the bush is in a flame of fire, and yet is not consumed. But the Lord, to prevent his irreverent approaches, and strike the greater awe and sense of the divine presence into him, called to him out of the bush, and forbade him drawing nearer; and to make him still more sensible of the sacredness of the place, God commanded him not to profane it, but to put off his sandals, for the ground whereon he stood was holy.§

Moses being prepared for an awful attention, the Almighty thus discovers him-

prisons, dungeons, dens, and caves of the earth. Let the fire in which the bush burned signify the fiery trials to which the church has been no stranger in all ages. Sometimes she has burned in the fire of persecution, and sometimes of division. But as the bush was not consumed, so neither shall the church be finally destroyed .- In vain shall the great red dragon persecute this woman clothed with the sun, and watch to devour her offspring; for a place is prepared for her in the wilderness by the great God, and there no necessary provision shall be wanting. How many times have bloody and deceitful men conspired her destruction? When were incendiaries wanting to foment and kindle those fires, which, without the immediate interposition of the Keeper of Israel, would certainly have wasted unto destruction, and completed the utter extinction of this humble bush? What society, but this alone, could have subsisted to this day, in the midst of a hating world? Where are now the mighty empires of antiquity? They are but an empty name, live only in history, having fallen to pieces by their own weight, or been crushed by bloody war. But the church of Christ, though she has undergone many revolutions, remains, and will remain, when the consumption determined by the Lord of hosts shall come upon all the earth. _M'Ewen.

§ Meaning, that wherever God, who is holiness itself, appears, the place is holy, while he is there.

On entering a sacred place it was usual for the orientals to lay the sandals aside,—a custom which still obtains among the Mohammedans, Brahmins, and Parsees. Morier says the shoe was always considered as vile, and never was allowed to enter sacred or respected places. "The natives of Bengal," says Ward, "never go into their own houses with their shoes on, nor into the houses of others, but always leave their shoes at the door. It would be a great affront not to attend to this mark of respect when visiting; and to enter a temple without pulling off the shoes would be an unpardonable offence."

self to him: 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' These words struck the frighted Moses with such reverence of the divine Majesty, and fear of the effects of his presumption, that he fell on the ground and covered his face, not daring to look upon the terrible glory.

But the Lord addressed him thus, 'I have seen the affliction of my people; I have heard their complaint, and am come down* to deliver them out of the hand of their oppressors, and to conduct them to the promised land, a land that floweth with milk and honey; to the place of the Ca-

* This is speaking according to human passion, or after the manner of men; God vouchsafes to express himself in the dialect and according to the capacity of man, that he may understand him.

+ The expression of 'flowing with milk and honey,' when applied to any country, like that of king Solomon's making silver to be in Jerusalem like stones, is hyberbolical. It denotes very rich pastures and grounds, which should feed cattle yielding abundance of milk, and which should produce great plenty of flowers and plants, for the bees to make honey. It represents indeed a general fruitfulness all the country over; for which Palestine, according to the account of writers of no mean character, was certainly once famous, however it came into Strabo's head to disparage it. For, to mention an author or two of some note, Aristæns, who was there to bring the seventy interpreters into Egypt, tells us, that immense and prodicious was the produce and plenty it afforded of trees, fruits, pasture, cattle, honey, besides the spicery, gold, and precious stones, imported from Arabia. Josephus describes the country as it was in his time, i. e. in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, as most remarkably fruitful and pleasant, and abounding in the very choicest productions of the earth. Bochart, much later, and since the country has been inhabited by the Turks, lived in it for the space of ten years, and, as he was parti-cularly curious and diligent in informing himself in every thing, speaks the greatest things imaginable of the richness of its soil, and the choiceness of its products: and, to name no more, our own countryman, Mr Sandys, who in the beginning of the last century travelled through it, gives it the character of 'a land adorned with beautiful mountains, and luxurious valleys; the rocks producing excellent waters, and no part empty of delight or profit:' and certainly those who either were natives or, have sojourned a long time in a country, may be supposed to have a more perfect knowledge of it than a foreigner who lived at a distance, as Strabo did. The truth is, if we consider of what a small compass the land of Canaan is, and yet what a prodigious number of inhabitants, both before and after the Israelites became masters of

naanites and Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And thee have I pitched upon to be the instrument in this great work; therefore be of good courage; for I will send thee to Pharaoh to demand liberty of him for my people, the children of Israel.'

Moses considering the hatred of the king of Egypt towards him, as well as his own insufficiency for, and unworthiness of being the messenger of the most high God, excused himself from the arduous task in these words: 'Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' When the Lord further encouraged him to proceed on the task; he still evaded the same, inquiring in what manner he should address the Israelites, and by whom he should tell them he was deputed. The Lord awfully replied, 'I AM THAT I AM. And thou shalt further say to them, I AM THAT I AM; that is, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you; that is the

it, it maintained, we must conclude it could not but deserve the character which the authors above cited have given us of it; and the barrenness and poverty of its soil, which some modern travellers seem to complain of, must be imputed either to its want of tillage and cultivation—which the Turks, its present inhabitants, are utterly ignorant of—or to the particular judgment of God, who, for the wickedness of any nation, has frequently performed, what he threatened to the Jews of old; 'I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass, and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.'—Stackhouse.

† This denotes the eternity of God, whose essence knows no beginning nor end. And it is common with the Hebrews to express the future in the present tense: and for this reason some say, 'I will be what I will be;' and contrad that it ought to be rendered not only from the letter of the Hebrew text, but from the genuine sense of the words: from which others likewise infer that it ought to be so rendered, 'I will be for ever:' and 'I will be with you, and redeem you from the Fgyptians:' and others, 'I will be with you in your present tribulations and future calamities,' I his name is likewise expressed in Revelation, by which it signifies 'Jebovah,' which is the proper name of God.

name I have had from all eternity, and by that name will I be known for ever. Go. gather the elders* of Israel, and say to them, The Lord God of your fathers hath appeared to me, and said, I have seen all the calamities that have befallen you in Egypt, and am resolved to deliver you, and lead you into the land of Canaan. The Israelites shall believe you, and you shall go to the king of Egypt, and say to him, The God of the Hebrews hath commanded us to go three days' journey into the desert, there to offer sacrifice to the Lord our God. This request, though so very reasonable, I know he will not grant, but refuse to let you go unless compelled by a powerful hand. But I will exert myself in many miraculous operations upon him and his subjects; and at last he shall permit you to depart; but you shall not go away empty, for ye shall be loaded with the spoils of the Egyptians.'

This solemn assurance delivered by the mouth of God, one would be apt to think, might have been sufficient to have encouraged Moses willingly to undertake the embassy; but either from the difficulty or boldness of the enterprise, or from diffidence of his own abilities, he declined it, and questioned whether the Israelites would receive his credentials.

This objection God immediately removed by a miracle; for commanding him to throw his sheep-hook on the ground, it was instantly turned into a serpent. Moses, affrighted at this sudden change of his sheep-hook, fled from it. But God, to encourage him, bid him take it up by the tail; which he had no sooner done but it resumed its former shape; and at the same time, to convince him that he should not want credit with the Israelites, God gave commission to perform the same miracle before them.

And to remove all further scruple, he condescended to give him another sign, bidding him put his hand into his bosom; which he had no sooner done but it was struck with a white leprosy.† And when by God's command he had put it into his bosom again, and plucked it out, his flesh resumed its former colour and substance.

Moreover, to arm him sufficiently, beyond all question, he was pleased to add a third miracle; 'If they will not believe these two former, thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon dry land, and the water shall become blood.'

Notwithstanding these solemn and repeated assurances of the divine aid, favour, and protection, Moses still waved the important office, urging as a farther plea, that he wanted eloquence, the great qualification of an ambassador; and since God had condescended to talk to him, he was more slow of speech than before.

This objection the Lord was pleased to remove, by putting him in mind of his omnipotence. 'Who made the mouth of man?' said he. 'And who made the dumb and deaf, and the blind, and him that sees? Was it not I? Now therefore go, and I will furnish thee with words, and make thee eloquent.'

Hitherto Moses had some glimpse of pretence for his unwillingness to go; but now all his objections are answered, and his scruples removed, he very bluntly begs to be excused from this enterprise, saying, 'O my Lord, instead of me, send, I pray thee, by him whom thou wilt send.'‡

^{*} By this some mean the doctors and governors; but it is most probable the elders were heads or chiefs of tribes and families. By which it is plain there was a private policy and economy continued among the Israelites, though in this servile condition.

[†] The evidence of this miracle was so much the more convincing, because the white leprosy, which was held incurable, was both inflicted and healed in an instant, without any outward means, or physical application. Dr Mead says, "I have seen a remarkable case of this in a countryman, whose whole body was so miserably seized with it, that his skin was shining as if covered with snow; and as the furfuraceous scales were daily rubbed off, the flesh appeared quick or raw underneath." The heathens imagined that this disease was inflicted by their gods, and that they alone could remove it.

[†] The text says, 'Send by the hand of him thou

plead in excuse for his not going,* God heard him patiently, and graciously condescended to remove his doubts; but when his modesty in declining the office and honour God proposed to him was turned into an obstinate refusal, the Lord was angry with him; but in his anger remembering mercy, he resumes Moses's last objection (which he had already answered in general) and shows him more particularly how to supply that defect: 'Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother?' said he. 'He is eloquent, and I will appoint him to meet thee. Tell him what I have said; and be assured that I will assist you both, and direct you what to say: he shall be the orator, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.+ And to strengthen thy commission, and give thee credit among my people, take this rod in thy hand, for I will enable thee to do many miracles with it.'

Moses, having nothing more to urge against this enterprise, at last yields, and took the rod of God‡ in his hand. Then

wilt send; where the word hand is put for the office or ministry. But by Moses's desiring God to send another instead of him, he means a man fitter to execute that commission than himself

* It is the opinion of several commentators on this place, and it is very probable, that Moses had another reason besides his insufficiency, which made him unwilling to go on this errand into Egypt, and which he was not willing to discover. Just before God appeared to Moses in the bush, and had this discourse with him, as we read in Exodus, the king of Egypt died; that king in whose reign Moses had slain the Egyptian, and who sought to apprehend him, to put him to death for it.

† That is, he shall consult thee instead of me, that from thee he may know my will, and thou shalt impart to him what thou receivest of me. Consonant to this is that of our Saviour Christ to his apostles, 'He that heareth you heareth me,' &c.—By the words, 'Thou shalt be to him instead of, or as God,' commentators show the power God now invested Moses with, in delivering him this commission, making him not only chief over Aaron, but the rest of the Israelites. For this name of God is no where given to men, but to signify the power of life and death over them.

t So it is now called, since God had so signally honoured it, and as it were, consecrated it to an holy use, Exod. iv. 26.

So long as Moses had any thing to ead in excuse for his not going,* God ard him patiently, and graciously conscended to remove his doubts; but hen his modesty in declining the office d honour God proposed to him was

Moses being thus convinced that God had designed him the agent in transacting this grand affair, whilst he was preparing himself for his journey, to make him more cheerfully proceed in it, and to dispel his fears of being called to account for his former actions in Egypt, God bids him return thither, assuring him, that those who had a design against his life were dead.

Then repeating his former order, he says, 'When thou comest into Egypt, be sure to perform all the miracles I have enabled thee to do; and to illustrate my power, I will so harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall refuse to let the children of Israel go, till I have slain his son, even his first-born.'

By the way God takes occasion to put Moses in mind of the danger of disobedience, to preserve him from lapsing into it hereafter.

It seems Moses, either through neglect, or indulgence to his wife, who was not an Israelite, had not yet circumcised his son Eliezer, by which he provoked the Lord o highly that in the way he threatened to kill him for his neglect.§

His wife Zipporah, understanding the cause of the divine displeasure, took a sharp flint, and immediately circumcised the child; and throwing the foreskin at her husband's feet, she said, 'Thou art a husband of blood to me.'

[§] It seems most probable from the context that Moses's punishment must be sickness, or some corporal visitation upon him; otherwise, if he had been in health, he, and not Zipporah his wife, would have circumcised the child.

Undoubtedly, the word blood here refers to the circumcision which was the cause of its effusion. Nor do they seem to conjecture amiss, who thus interpret this text: 'With the blood of my child I preserve and save thee: for, the neglect of the child's being circumcised being thy fault, I

Moses, and dismissed him to pursue his journey, which he did, and soon arrived at his father-in-law Jethro's house, whom, as he acquainted not with the particular reason of his leaving Egypt, so neither does he now say any thing to him of the vision he had seen, nor the message he had received from God to deliver to the king of Egypt; but as he had entered himself by contract into Jethro's service, and become so nearly related as to be his son-in-law, he thought it but reasonable to ask his consent to return to Egypt to visit his brethren, and see whether they were living. Jethro readily gave consent in the usual form, 'Go in peace.'

Moses being now in the way to Egypt, the Lord commanded Aaron his brother* to go into the wilderness to meet Moses. Aaron obeyed the holy call, and went as far as Mount Horeb, where he met his brother, and embraced him; to whom Moses told all that God had commanded him, and the wonders he was to perform.

The two brothers thus joined in commission, though Moses was sovereign, repair to Egypt; and summoning the elders of the people together, Aaron delivers the message which the Lord had sent by Moses, and Moses straightway confirmed

This being over, the Lord pardoned it, by doing the miracles which God had commanded, in the sight of the people, who thereupon believed, and received them joyfully.

> And now, all being convinced that the Lord had taken compassion on the wretched condition of the children of Israel, that he had visited them in their affliction, and had taken a course for their deliverance, they fell down and worshipped him.

CHAPTER II.

Moses and Aaron arrive at the court of Pharaoh, deliver their message to the king, and are reprimanded by him.-Pharaoh increases the burden of the Israelites .- God renews his promise to his chosen people.-Pharaoh's heart is hardened, insomuch that he would not release the Israelites from bondage, notwithstanding the miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron.

THE servants of God thus commissioned, arrive at the court of Pharaoh; and in positive terms demanded the release of the Israelites. The haughty tyrant not only denied compliance with their demand, but most impiously arraigned the divine prerogative, and called in question the existence of the only wise and true God in these presumptuous words: 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.'

Moses and Aaron, to inform him whom they meant by the Lord, replied, 'The God of the Hebrews whom we adore. hath commanded us to offer sacrifice to him; therefore we beg leave to go three days' journey into the desert, that we may pay due adoration to our God, lest he punish us for our disobedience, and you

much more for hindering us.'

The king, incensed at this unusual liberty they took, and looking upon them as incendiaries, sharply reprimanded them, saying, 'Why do ye hinder the people from work? Because they are numerous, you would incite them to rebel; be gone

have saved thy life by the blood of the circumcision, which otherwise God might have taken away.'-The knives of stone, used by the Jews in circumcision, were not enjoined by the law; but the use was founded either on custom, convenience, or experience that instruments of this kind were less dangerous than those of metal. Zipporah used a stone to circumcise her son. Joshua did the same at Gilgal, Josh. v. 2. The Egyptians used knives of stone to open dead bodies that were to be enbalmed. They used stone knives to make incisions in the tree, whence the balm distilled; also, to cut the canes for writing with. The Africans of Morocco, and some Americans, still have them in common use. The oriental Jews commonly used them for the circumcision of their children, being not unlike flints for guns: but the western Jews use a razor.— Calmel.

* Hence it is plain, that Aaron, as a prophet,

received a revelation from God; which is likewise confirmed, 1 Sam. ii. 27. 'Did not I plainly appear to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt?' for Eli was descended from Aaron.

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all to your labour, or I will make you straw, and yet demand brick of us, which sensible of royal displeasure.'

The king having thus rudely dismissed Moses and Aaron, gave charge to the taskmasters that they should no more give the people straw to make brick * as they had done before; but make them go gather straw for themselves where they could find it; but yet to lay upon them the same tale of bricks without abatement; for, said he, they are idle, and this is but a pretence to excuse them from their work. The taskmasters acquainted their under officers with this severe injunction, who immediately told it to the people, and they accordingly were forced to wander about the country to seek for stubble instead of straw; the taskmasters at the same time exacting from them their usual number of bricks; which when they were not able to perform, the under officers, who were Israelites, and whom the taskmasters had set over them, were called to account, and beaten.

They, not well knowing from whence this severity proceeded, whether from the edict of the king, or the rigour of the taskmasters, complained to the king himself, and laying their grievance before him, in a most humble manner expostulated the matter with him thus: 'Why should the king deal so severely with his servants? The taskmasters allow us no

is impossible to be done: and though they are in fault, yet are we punished.'

This just and reasonable desire, instead of redress, met with an addition to the cause of their complaint; the king told them they should have no straw, and yet deliver the full tale of bricks.

This answer gave them much uneasiness, and drove them almost to despair: so that, meeting with Moses and Aaron in the way, as they came from Pharaoh, and looking upon them as the cause of having these heavier burdens laid upon them, they unadvisedly giving way to their present passion, discharged their grief and anger upon them, saying, 'The Lord revenge us on you; for ye have made us hateful and abominable in the sight of the king and his subjects, and have given them occasion to oppress us the more.+

This reflection grieved the soul of Moses, who expected a more grateful return for his care and concern for them; wherefore retiring from them, he addressed himself to God in this humble expostulation: 'Why, O Lord, hast thou thus afflicted this people? For since I spoke to Pharaoh in thy name, he hath treated them with more severity than before; and they are more unlikely to be delivered

Moses's concern for the oppression of the Israelites made him forget the promise God had given him, and the perverseness of Pharaoh, which he had foretold: however, God, to encourage him, gives him this gracious answer: 'I am the Lord, the Almighty God, that appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Was I not known to them by my name Jehovah? Be assured that I the Lord, who made a covenant with their fathers to give to

^{*} The Egyptian bricks were a mixture of clay, mud, and straw, slightly blended and kneaded together, and afterwards baked in the sun. Philo, in his life of Moses, says, that they used straw to bind their bricks. The straw still preserves its original colour, and is a proof that these bricks were never burnt in stacks or kilns. Part of the bricks of the celebrated tower of Babel (or of Belus, as the Greeks termed it,) were made of clay mixed with chopped straw, or broken reeds, to compact it, and then dried in the sun. Their solidity is equal to that of the hardest stone. Among the ruins discovered on the site of ancient Nineveh, are houses, built of sun-dried bricks, cemented with mud; and similarly constructed dwellings were observed by Mr Buckingham in the village of Karagoosh, near Mousul in Mesopotamia. At this day the town of Busheher (or Bushire,) like most of the towns in Persia, is built with sundried bricks and mud .- Horne.

[†] The text is in Exod. v. 21. 'Ye have put a sword into their hand to slay us,' which cannot be literally taken here; for the Egyptians had both the civil and military sword always in their power, to use as they pleased. But this is a scripture phrase, and is often used to express any pungent calamity or affliction.

their posterity the land of Canaan, have each: 'Since the children of Israel, says heard their complaints, and remembered my promise. Therefore say thus to the children of Israel: I am Jehovah, who exist only of myself, and give existence to all beings. Tell them, I will deliver them from the Egyptian slavery, with the power of my Almighty arm, and inflict heavy judgments on those that oppress them. Nor will I only deliver you all from this bondage, but I will take you under my immediate protection: ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, your God, who will release you from the oppressions of Egypt: and I will bring you into the land, concerning which I lifted up my hand * in confirmation that I would give it to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in their posterity: and I will give it you for an inheritance. I am Jehovah, the Lord, that promiseth this, and that can, and will do it.'

Encouraged by this gracious declaration of the Almighty, Moses accordingly re- ing me and abusing my people, I will paired to the children of Israel, and de- now permit him to go on in his obstinate livered his message, as God had command- humour, that I may exert my power in ed. But they, considering the sad in- miraculous operations in the land of crease of their servitude ever since he Egypt. Therefore when ye come into undertook to be their deliverer, were so prejudiced against him, that they would not believe him.

Upon this he left them, till either the extremity of their sufferings, or the hand of God eminently appearing in plaguing their oppressor, should awaken them to a greater desire of deliverance.

But God, pursuing the ends of his Providence, commanded Moses to go to the king of Egypt, and demand the liberty of his people.

Moses having been so roughly dismissed from Pharaoh's presence, and so unkindly rejected by the Israelites, declined the errand, by drawing an argument from

* This is a phrase often used in scripture to express swearing, which was usually done by lifting up of hands.

he, thine own people, would not hear me, though what I offered was so much to their advantage, how can I expect that so wicked a prince as Pharaoh is, should give credit to such a stammerer + as I am, in a matter so much to his loss?"

But the Lord, as before, was still patient in hearing, and removed Moses's objections; and therefore said to him, 'Consider, I have made thee as a God t to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy interpreter, or orator. Thou shalt tell him all that I have commanded thee, and ye shall demand of Pharaoh the deliverance of my people. And that thou mayest not be discouraged by a repulse as before, take notice that Pharaoh shall give no credit to what thou sayest, that I may thereby show my power and wonders on him and his people, and deliver the children of Israel by the strength of my hand. For, since Pharaoh hath begun to harden his heart in contemptuously treat-Pharaoh's presence, and he shall demand a miracle of you to convince him of the truth of your message, thou shalt direct Aaron to cast his rod on the ground before Pharaoh, and it shall be turned into a serpent.'

Pursuant to the divine command, they appeared before Pharaoh, and delivered

‡ That is, by exercising the judgments of God upon him, thou shalt be as terrible to him as God.

[†] The word in the text, Exod. vi. 12. is rendered, 'Who am of uncircumcised lips,' that is, slow of speech; for Moses laboured under a defect in his tongue, as he urged when God first pitched upon him to undertake the deliverance of his people. But the word uncircumcised is phraseologically used upon several occasions by the Hebrews, as when they called any one uncircumcised in heart, mind, or tongue, they mean one that labours under a defect in any of these; besides, as circumcision was the first and greatest sacrament among them, so uncircumcision was esteemed by them the greatest scandal and disgrace.

their message; which he rejecting, Aaron cast down his rod before the king, in the sight of his servants, and it became a serpent.

To confront this miracle, the king presently sent for his magicians, who by their enchantments performed the same that Aaron did by God's immediate power. For throwing down their rods, they became in appearance serpents; but with this difference, that Aaron's devoured theirs, and resumed its wonted form.*

* No doubt Pharaoh and his servants were both astonished and alarmed, when they saw Aaron's rod become a terrible serpent before them. But as magicians and sorcerers were in high repute in Egypt, being called wise men, and supposed capable of performing very extraordinary things by their skill in the occult sciences; probably Pharaoh and his courtiers endeavoured to believe, that Moses and Aaron were nothing more than two great magicians, and that the sorcerers and magi-cians of Egypt were able to contend with them. Accordingly, some of the most renowned among them were called in, of whom we find Jannes and Jambres were the principal: 2 Tim. iii. 8: and 'they also did in like manner with their enchantments; for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents.'-No doubt many of these professors of sorcery, or magic, were expert in le-gerdemain, and imposed on the spectators by various artifices: yet they who reverence the scriptures, will hardly deny, that many of them had a real intercourse with evil spirits, and by their help actually made discoveries, and produced effects beyond the reach of human power or sagacity. It remains therefore to inquire into the fact here briefly recorded, what it was, and how performed. Some expositors consider it as merely an illusion, by which the magicians made the spectators think that they saw serpents when they did not. Others imagine, that the magicians had contrived to convey serpents thither, concealing their rods, to make it appear as if they were changed into serpents. Others think, that the power of Satan produced appearances like serpents, instead of the rods which were conveyed away. But some expositors are not satisfied with any of these interpretations, because it is expressly said, 'they became serpents:' and 'Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.' therefore conclude, that the rods actually became real living serpents, and in that form were swallowed by the serpent into which Aaron's rod was changed. We cannot indeed in general assign exact bounds to the power of evil spirits, who, when permitted, seem capable of any thing which created beings can do: yet, creation in every instance is commonly supposed to be exclusively the work of God. And on this account, they who adhere to the literal interpretation conclude, that while the magicians used their enchantments, expecting the interposition of the demons to whom they applied, the Lord himself was pleased to interpose, and to

This miracle made no impression on the obstinate tyrant; therefore God resolved to make use of more sensible scourges, and afflict the Egyptians with such a succession of plagues, as should compel them to dismiss the enslaved Israelites; and having observed to Moses, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he bid him take the rod which had been turned into a serpent, and present himself in Pharaoh's view, at his usual time of coming to the banks of the river Nile; † giving him this fresh in-

effect a real change of their rods into serpents; and as they could not certainly know how far the power of their demons extended, they would naturally suppose that this was the effect of their enchantments.-Pharaoh was evidently seeking some pretence for disregarding the miracle which he had witnessed, and proudly disobeying the divine command; and it was the Lord's design to give him up to final obduracy. It does not therefore appear, that there is any thing, on this supposition, inconsistent with the divine perfections, or materially different from his dealings with other haughty and obstinate rebels in similar circumstances. however this may be determined, when 'Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods;' that is, when the serpent, into which his rod had been changed, swallowed the serpents into which their rods had been changed: and when it again became a rod in Aaron's hand, but their rods were vanished, and were no more found; the event would have satisfied any impartial person, on which side the truth lay: and, had not a previous bias lain upon Pharaoh's mind, this must have convinced him that Moses and Aaron spake and acted by divine au-

thority.—Scott.

† The Nile is a large river of Africa, which flows through Nubia and Egypt. Below Cairo, where it is 1000 yards wide, it divides into two main branches, which again separate into several arms, the extreme eastern and western of which give to the lower part of Egypt the form of a delta. There were anciently reckoned seven principal mouths by which its waters were poured into the Mediterranean; only those of Damietta and Rosetta are at present navigable; the others have been choked up. The sources of the Nile have never been accurately determined. The true Nile is formed by the confluence of the Bahr-el-Abiad, or white river, and the Bahr-el-Azrek, or blue river. The former, rising in Abyssinia, to the south-west of lake Dembea, comes from the south-east, and was considered by Bruce as the Nile. The latter, however, which comes from the south-west, and is supposed to rise in the Mountains of the Moon, brings down the greatest mass of water, and is considered by Cailliaud and Browne as the true The distance from the confluence of its two head branches to the sea is about 1500 miles; from its highest sources, probably not far from 2500 miles. The cataracts, so much celebrated by the ancients, modern discoveries have shown to be

though he hath been so obstinate hitherto as to detain the Israelites, their God will

insignificant; they appear to be hardly any thing more than what we call in this country, rapids. The inundations of the Nile are owing to periodical rains, which fall to the south of the seventeenth degree, and melt the snow in the mountains of Abyssinia. They commence in March, but have no effect upon the river until three months later. Towards the end of June, it begins to rise, and continues rising at the rate of about four inches a day, until the end of September, when it falls for about the same period of time. Herodotus informs us that, in his time, a rise of sixteen cubits was sufficient to water the country; at present, twenty-two cubits are considered a good rise. A rise of twenty-six cubits, in 1829, destroyed a great many villages, with their inhabitants. The lower part of Egypt has, therefore, been very much raised since the time of Herodotus, by the accumulated deposits of rich slime brought down by the river. Mr Bruce, speaking of the inundation attending the Nile, says,—every morning "about nine, a small cloud not above four feet broad, appears in the East, whirling violently round, as if upon an axis; but, arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, and extends itself greatly, and seems to call up vapours from all opposite quarters. These clouds having attained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence, and put me always in mind of Elisha foretelling, rain on mount Carmel." Among the animals with which the Nile abounds, the most remarkable are the crocodile and the hippopotamus. In the ancient Egyptian mythology, the Nile was revered as the tutelary deity of the country; and it is therefore probable that Pharaoh went to pay his morning adoration to the river,-the Egyptians esteeming it a part of their religion to wash themselves in the river twice or thrice a-day. When the waters began to rise, the inhabitants celebrated the festivals called Niloa, sacrificed a black bull to him, strewed lotus flowers on the water, &c. An instrument, called a Nilometer, was constructed by the ancient Egyptians, consisting of a rod or pillar, marked with the necessary divisions for the purpose of ascertaining the pro-portionate increases of the flood of the Nile. It is said by several Arabian writers to have been first set up by Joseph during his regency in Egypt .-There cannot be a finer sight than Egypt at two seasons of the year. For if a man ascends some mountain, on one of the largest pyramids of Grand Cairo, in the month of July and August, he beholds a vast sea, in which numberless towns and villages appear, with several causeys leading from place to place; the whole interspersed with groves and fruit-trees, whose tops only are visible; all which forms a delightful prospect. This view is bounded by mountains and woods, which terminate, at the utmost distance the eye can discover, the most beautiful horizon that can be imagined. On the contrary, in winter,-January and February, -the whole country is like one continued scene of

struction: 'Tell him the almighty God of afflict him for his perverseness: that he the Hebrews hath sent thee to him; and will make him sensible by his judgments, which he will inflict upon him and his people.'

And to encourage Moses in the execution of his commission, he promised his assistance in the performance of the first miracle, which was turning the water of the river into blood.

Moses, ever attentive to the divine command, at the time appointed waited the king's coming to the river, and accosted him with the message. The infidel prince, deaf to the call of God by two heavenly missionaries, persisted in his resolution, (so little did the first miracle operate upon him,) and though Moses and Aaron admonished him of the omnipotence of their God, he would not believe them.

Aaron therefore receiving the rod from Moses, lifted it up, as God had commanded; and striking the water, it turned into blood; * which immediately stagnating, grew so offensive, that the fish were suffocated, and the inhabitants, loathing to drink of the waters of the river, + were

beautiful meadows, whose verdure, enamelled with flowers, charms the eye. The spectator beholds, on every side, flocks and herds dispersed over all the plains, with infinite numbers of husbandmen and gardeners. The air is then perfumed by the great quantity of blossoms on the orange, lemon, and other trees, and is so pure, that a wholesomer or more agreeable is not found in the world .-See Brit. Cycl.

. Theodoret upon Exodus says thus of this change of the waters of the Nile: being changed into blood they accused the Egyptians of the murder of the infants. And the book of Wisdom, xi. 6, makes the same observation: 'Instead of a fountain of running water, the enemies were troubled with corrupt blood, which was to rebuke the commandment of the killing of the children.'—The Egyptians looked upon their river not only as consecrated to a deity; but, if we may believe some authors, as their chief national god; and worshipped it accordingly. There was therefore a great propriety in this judgment. They must have felt the utmost astonishment and horror when they beheld their sacred stream changed and polluted; and the divinity whom they wor-shipped so shamefully foiled and debased.— Fleetwood and Bryant.

+ The force of this expression cannot be well felt without taking into consideration the peculiar pleasantness and great salubrity of the waters of the Nile. "The water of Egypt," says the Abbé forced to dig for water in new places, to allay their thirst.

Notwithstanding this plague continued upon them for seven days, yet Pharaoh was still obstinate; and his hatred to the Israelites inflamed the more, because Moses being known to have had his education among the Egyptians, the king concluded, that all this was performed by magic skill. Wherefore calling for his magicians, he put them upon the same trial; who, taking some of the water which the Egyptians had digged, by their enchantments they made him believe that they turned it to blood.

Mascrier, "is so delicious, that one would not wish the heat to be less, or to be delivered from the sensation of thirst. The Turks find it so exquisite that they excite themselves to drink of it by eating salt. It is a common saying among them, that if Mohammed had drank of it he would have besought God that he might never die, in order to have had this continual gratification. When the Egyptians undertake the pilgrimage of Mecca, or go out of their country on any other account, they speak of nothing but the pleasure they shall have at their return in drinking of the waters of the There is no gratification to be compared to this; it surpasses, in their esteem, that of seeing their relations and families. All those who have tasted of this water allow that they never met with the like in any other place. When a person drinks of it for the first time he can scarcely be persuaded that it is not a water prepared by art; for it has something in it inexpressibly agreeable and pleasing to the taste; and it should have the same rank among waters that champaign has among wines. But its most valuable quality is that it is exceedingly salutary. It never incommodes, let it be drank in what quantity it may: this is so true that it is no uncommon thing to see some persons drink three buckets of it in a day without the least inconvenience! When I pass such encomiums on the water of Egypt it is right to observe that I speak only of that of the Nile, which indeed is the only water drinkable, for their well water is detestable and unwholesome. Fountains are so rare that they are a kind of prodigy in that country; and as to rain water, that is out of the question, as scarcely any falls in Egypt."—"A person," says Mr Harmer, "who never before heard of the deliciousness of the Nile water, and of the large quantities which on that account are drank of it, will, I am sure, find an energy in those words of Moses to Pharaoh, 'The Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river,' which he never observed before. They will loathe to drink of that water which they used to prefer to all the waters of the universe; loathe to drink of that for which they had been accustomed to long, and will rather choose to drink of well water, which in their country is detestable!"—Dr A. Clarke.

Although this was but a delusion, yet it convinced Pharaoh, that what Moses and Aaron had done was not the effect of any supernatural virtue, but a mere trick of art, and thereupon returned resolute to stop the Israelites.

But it pleased God to display repeated miracles before this cruel and obstinate monarch; for as soon as the seven days were expired, Moses, at the command of God, accosted him again, and renewed his instances for the delivery of the Israelites, threatening upon his refusal to bring upon the land such a prodigious number of frogs, as should visit him and his subjects in their most private recesses.

Pharaoh, regardless of his threats, defied him; upon which Moses gave Aaron an order to take the rod, and stretch forth his hand with it over the river, which in an instant so affected all the waters of Egypt, that, not waiting for the slow productions of nature, the animated streams unburdened themselves upon the land in shoals of frogs, which immediately invaded all parts, infesting even the royal palace with their disagreeable croaking.*

^{*} As the frog was, in Egypt, an emblem of Osiris, or the sun, the first object of idolatrous worship to the nations of the East, it is probable the Egyptians regarded it with superstitions venera-tion. If this conjecture is well founded, it brings into view the secret reason of the second plague; for it is perfectly consistent with the divine wisdom to punish a nation by means of that which they foolishly revere. These vengeful reptiles were produced in the streams of the Nile, and in the lakes which were supplied from his waters, because the river was supposed, by that deluded people, to possess an uncommon degree of sanctity, and to deserve their religious veneration; it was the object of their confidence, it was accounted the grand source of their enjoyments, and was the constant theme of their praise; it was, therefore, just to pollute those waters with an innumerable multitude of impure animals, to which the respect and confidence which were due only to the true God, the father of the rain, had been impiously transferred. This loathsome plague extended to every place, and to every class of men The frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt; they entered into their houses, and into their bedchambers; they crawled upon their persons, upon their beds and into their kitchen utensils. The whole country, their palaces, their temples, their persons—all was polluted and hateful. Nor was

Now again Pharaoh had recourse to his magiciaus, who by their mimic power so deluded him, that they made him believe they wrought the same miracle, which hardened him for a while; but the loath-some p'ague pursuing him and his people wherever they went, he was forced to apply to Moses and Aaron for relief, offering to capitulate with their God upon terms of permission for them to go and sacrifice to him.

Moses demanded the time when this should be put to an issue, and they both

it in their power to wash away the nauseous filth with which they were tainted, for every stream and every lake was full of pollution. To a people who affected the most scrupulous purity in their persons, their habitations, and manner of living, nothing almost can be conceived more insufferable than this plague. The frog is, compared with many other reptiles, a harmless animal; it neither injures by its bite nor by its poison: but it must have excited on that occasion, a disgust which rendered life almost an insupportable burden. The eye was tormented with beholding the march of their impure legions, and the ear with hearing the harsh tones of their voices: the Egyptians could recline upon no bed where they were not compelled to admit their cold and filthy embrace; they tasted no food which was not infected by their touch; and they smelled no perfume, but the fœtid stench of their slime, or the putrid exhalations emitted from their dead carcases. The insufferable annoyance of such insignificant creatures illustriously displayed the power of God, while it covered the haughty and unfeeling persecutors of his people with confusion, and filled them with utter dismay. When the Lord removed the frogs, however, they were not swept away like the locusts which succeeded them, but destroyed, and left on the face of the ground. They were not annihilated, nor resolved into mud, nor marched back into the river, from whence they had come; but left dead upon the ground, to prove the truth of the miracle,-that they had not died by the hands of men, but by the power of God; that the great deliverance was not like the works of the magicians, a lying wonder, but a real interpo-sition of almighty power, and an effect of divine goodness. The Egyptians were, therefore, reduced to the necessity of collecting them into heaps, which had the effect of more rapidly disengaging the putrid effluvia, and thus for a time increasing the wretchedness of the country. Their destruction was probably followed by a pestilence, which cut off many of the people, in addition to those that died in consequence of the grievous vexations they endured from their loathsome adversaries; for, in one of the songs of Zion, it is said, 'he sent frogs, which destroyed them; laid waste their lands, and infected themselves with pestilential disorders .- Paxton's Script. Illust,

Now again Pharaoh had recourse to his agreed upon the next day. Accordingly, agicians, who by their mimic power so duded him, that they made him believe ey wrought the same miracle, which ardened him for a while; but the loath-

The impious Pharaoh vainly imagined that the artillery of vengeance was then exhausted, unfaithfully broke his word, and refused to let the Israelites go to serve their God.

This violation so provoked the Almighty, that he resolved to treat the haughty tyrant in a more surprising manner than he had hitherto done; for before, he first denounced his judgments, by giving him warning, that he might escape them. But now he would give him no further notice, and therefore commanded Moses to direct Aaron to stretch out his rod, and strike the dust with it, that it might become lice.

Aaron had no sooner obeyed, than straightway the animated dust turned into swarms of vermin, which the magicians, who had faintly imitated the former plagues, now attempted in vain. They owned their art outdone, and acknowledged this to be the inimitable work of a divine hand.*

^{*} The Egyptians affected great external purity. and were very nice both in their persons and clothing. Uncommon care was taken that they might not harbour any vermin. They were particularly solicitous upon this head; thinking it would be a great profanation of the temple which they entered, if any animalcula of this sort were concealed in their garments. It would have been well if their worship had corresponded with their outward appearance; but, on the contrary, it seems to have been more foul and base than that of any other nation. Their gods were contemptible and ridiculous, and their rites filthy, and to the last degree bestial and obscene. Yet they were carried on with an appearance of outward purity, and a scrupulous show of cleanliness. The judgments therefore inflicted by the hand of Moses were directed against the prejudices of the Egyptians; and they were made to suffer for their false delicacy in placing the essence of religion in external cleanliness, to the omission of things of real weight. When the devil and his agents are in the height of their pride, God shames them in a trifle. The rod is lift up. The very dust receives life. Lice abound every where, and make no difference betwixt beg-gars and princes. Though Pharaoli and his cour-

obstinacy of Pharaoh, who would not in the least hearken to Moses and Aaron, God condescended to give him another summons.

'Rise up,' says God to Moses, 'early in the morning, and meet Pharaoh as he comes to the river. Tell him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go that they may serve me, or I will send swarms of flies * upon thee and thy people, which

tiers abhorred to see themselves lousy, yet they hoped this miracle would be more easily imitable: but now the greater possibility, the greater foil. How are the great wonder-mongers of Egypt abashed, that they can neither make lice of their own, nor deliver themselves from the lice that are made! Those that could make serpents and frogs, could not either make or kill lice; to show them that those frogs and serpents were not their own workmanship. Now Pharaoh must needs see how impotent a devil lie served, that could not make that vermin which every day arises voluntarily out of corruption. Jannes and Jambres cannot now make those lice (so much as by delusion,) which, at another time, they cannot choose but produce unknowing, and which now they cannot avoid. That spirit which is powerful to execute the greatest things when he is bidden, is unable to do the least when he is restrained. Now these co-rivals of Moses can say, 'This is the finger of God.' Ye foolish enchanters, was God's finger in the lice, not in the frogs, not in the blood, not in the serpent? And why was it rather in the less than in the greater? because ye did imitate the other, not these; as if the same finger of God had not been before in your imitation, which was now in your restraint; as if ye could have failed in these, if ye had not been only permitted the other.-Bryant and Hall.

* The judgment to be denounced was a plague of flies, (including dog-flies, hornets, wasps, beetles, &c.,) which were brought all over the land in vast numbers; and seem to have been not only formidable for their swarms, but for the painfulness of their stings, as well as of their bite, which was There is reason to think, that the intolerable. Egyptians had particular deities, whose department was to ward off those natural evils to which their votaries were liable. The province allotted to several deities was particularly to drive away flies. But this is not all: these insects, however incredible it may appear, were in many places worshipped. This reverence seems to have been shown, sometimes, to prevent their being troublesome; at other times, because they were esteemed sacred to the deity. Nor did they only show an idolatrous regard to flies in general; there was a deity styled Dens Musca, who was particularly worshipped under the characteristic of a fly. This idolatry originated in Egypt, whence it was brought to Palestine, &c. by the Phœnicians to Sidon, Tyre, and Byblus; and so into other regions of the

And yet again, notwithstanding the shall fill their houses, and cover the face of the earth. And that thou mayest know that this is brought as a judgment upon thee and thy subjects, for oppressing my people, I will on that day separate the land of Goshen, in which my servants dwell, from the rest of Egypt, that the flies shall not molest them.'

> Accordingly, upon Pharaoh's obstinately persisting to detain the Israelites in slavery, the next day clouds of swarming insects

world. Such being the worship of this people, nothing could be more striking and determinate than the judgment brought upon them. They were punished by the very things which they revered; and though they boasted of spells and charms, yet they could not ward off the evil. They had gods, who, they thought, could avert all mis-chief; but their power was ineffectual; and both the prince and the people were obliged to acknowledge the inferiority of their own deities by suing through Moses to the God of Israel.

How intolerable a plague flies can prove, may be known from places near lakes and pools, which have been on their account deserted, and rendered desolate. Such was the fate of Myuns in Ionia, and of Atarnæ. The inhabitants were forced to quit these cities, not being able to stand the flies and gnats with which they were pestered. Trajan was obliged to raise the siege of a city in Arabia, before which he had sat down, being driven away by the swarms of these insects. 'The fly of Egypt' seems to have been proverbial. Hence Isaiah says, 'The Lord shall hiss for the fly of Egypt,' vii. 18. We are told by Moses, that the hornet drove out the Canaanite : by which we may infer, that, before the coming of the Israelites, several cities had been evacuated through the terror of this insect.—Philo, the Jew, has a fine observation on the plagues of Egypt. "Some perhaps may inquire, why did God punish the country by such minute and contemptible animals, as frogs, lice, flies, rather than by bears, lions, leopards, or other kinds of savage beasts, which prey on human flesh? or if not by these, why not by the Egyptian asp, whose bite is instant death? But let him learn, if he be ignorant, first, that God chose rather to correct than destroy the in-habitants: for if he desired to annihilate them utterly, he had no need to have made use of animals as his auxiliaries, but of the divinely inflicted evils of famine and pestilence. Next, let him further learn that lesson, so necessary for every state of life, namely, that men, when they war, seek the most powerful aid to supply their own weakness; but God, the highest and greatest power, who stands in need of nothing, if at any time he chooses to employ instruments, as it were, to inflict chastisement, chooses not the strongest and greatest, disregarding their strength; but rather the mean and the minute, which he endues with irresistible power to chastise offenders."-Bryant and Hales.

filled the air, which in numberless troops days' journey into the wilderness, and descended to the earth, and with their sacrifice to our God, as he hath comsullen and unusual noise surprised and manded us.' affrighted the wretched inhabitants.

from the poisonous bitings of these revengeful animals, and a succession of painted misery invaded them on all sides.

Pharaoh's guards could not save him from the painful attacks of this flying host, which boldly swarmed about, and seized the very weapons they should draw in their master's defence.

The sword and spear were useless to repel this airy foe, whose penetrating sting was sharper than their point.

The magicians with confusion looked upon this direful plague, and no more pretended to offer at any imitation. A general horror filled the towns and fields, and all the country echoed with the cries of tortured men and cattle.

Pharaoh, not able to endure this plague, called presently for Moses and Aaron, and in a sullen discontented tone bid them go and sacrifice to their God, but not beyond the bounds of Egypt.

He was desirous of relief, but unwilling to part with a people by whose slavery he had reaped so great advantage; and being a stranger and enemy to the true God, did not conceive that the Israelites could not acceptably sacrifice to their God, whilst under the Egyptian bondage.

Moses, desirous of convincing, rather than inflaming the infidel prince, discreetly answered, 'We cannot sacrifice to our God in this land, for that would be an affront* to the Egyptians, and they will be revenged on us: permit us therefore to avoid their resentment, by going three

'If nothing else will serve you,' said All attempts proved vain and fruitless Pharaoh, but to go into the desert, I will to remove this increasing evil; their most let you go, but not far; and in return for private recesses could not secure them this concession, entreat your God to remove this plague.'

> Moses promised to intercede for him, but cautioned Pharaoh to be sincere in his grant. And being gone from his presence, addressed himself to God to remove the plague of flies. His prayers were heard, and the insects took their flight. But the plagues were no sooner removed, than the tyrant reassumed his former obstinacy, nor would even yet suffer the Israelites to worship the Lord their God in the way and manner he had directed them.

> Upon this high provocation, God sent Moses again to Pharaoh with this message: 'Thus saith the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go that they may serve me, or be assured I will visit all thy cattle that are in the field with a grievous murrain; + and to make thee still more sensible of my omnipotence, I will, by a wonderful distinction, preserve the cattle of my people, whilst I destroy those of the Egyptians.'

> The awful threatening was most severely executed the very next day, through the obstinacy of the king. The generous

^{*} That is, if we should sacrifice those creatures which the Egyptians worship for gods, as the ox and the sheep, they will be affronted to see us sacrifice their gods to our God. Herodotus expressly tells as that the Egyptians esteemed it a profanation to sacrifice any kind of cattle, except swine, bulls, clean calves, and geese.

⁺ We may observe a particular scope and meaning in this calamity, if we consider it with regard to the Egyptians, which would not have existed in respect to any other people. It is well known that they held in idolatrous reverence the lion, wolf, dog, cat, ape, and goat. But they had gods which they held in still greater reverence than these; such were the ox or steer; the cow and heifer; and the ram. Among these the Apis and Mnevis are well known; the former, a sacred bull adored at Memphis; and the latter at Heliopolis. There was also a cow or heifer which had the like honours at Momemphis. To these may be added the goat at Mendes, though perhaps not so celebrated as the others. This judgment, therefore, upon the kine of Egypt, was very significant in its execution and purport. The Egyptians not only suffered a severe loss, but what was of far greater consequence, they saw the represen-tative of their deities, and their deities themselves, sink before the God of the Hebrews .- Bryant.

pastures, and sunk under his rider; the ass and camel could no longer support their burdens, or their own weight; the labouring ox dropped down dead before the plough; the harmless sheep died bleating, and the faithful dogs lay gasping by

Notwithstanding this horrid spectacle, Pharaoh continued his former temper, resolved still to brave heaven with his impious perverseness: and, remembering what Moses had said of the preservation of the Israelites' cattle, he sent to Goshen to learn how it had fared with them, and was assured there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead; by which he might have seen that this was no casualty, but a direct judgment upon him, exactly answering the divine prediction. Notwithstanding this, he continued in his former resolution, not to let the Israelites go.

As all these means proved ineffectual to soften the obdurate heart of this impious monarch, the Almighty therefore determined to surprise him with a plague, without giving him any warning, and immediately commanded Moses and Aaron to take handsful of ashes from the furnace, and before Pharaoh's face to throw them in the air.

The ashes soon spread the dire contagion, and the tainted air infected the Egyptians' blood with its poisonous influence; which appeared upon their skin in 'swelling scabs and ulcers," and their

horse loathed his full manger and loved whole constitution became a noisome spring of sores. This plague was so torturing that the magicians, who possibly once more would have tried their skill to see if they could regain their credit, were not able to stand before Moses, for it affected them as well as the rest of the Egyptians.

Pharaoh's obstinacy, which before proceeded from an implacable hatred to the chosen people of God, now arose from a judicial hardness of heart, as the immediate effect of a divine and supernatural cause. The Almighty rendered the very powers of heaven subservient to his divine purpose, giving this charge to his servant Moses, 'Go early in the morning to the king of Egypt, and tell him that I, the God of the Hebrews, demand the liberty of my people, that they may worship me: which if he refuse, he may be assured I will shower my plagues+ upon him, and his people, and I will make him know that I am the only God on earth. Say further to him: If when lately I smote the cattle with the murrain, I had smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, thou hadst been cut off from the earth. 1 But

the Egyptians, and to which it is opposed as a contrast. They had several cities styled Typhonian, such as Heliopolis, Idythia, Abaris, and Busiris. In these, at particular seasons, they sacrificed men. The objects thus destined, were persons with bright hair, and a particular complexion, such as were seldom to be found among the native Egyptians. Hence, we may infer that they were for-eigners; and it is probable, that whilst the Israelites resided in Egypt, they were chosen from their body. They were burnt alive upon a high altar, and thus sacrificed for the good of the people. At the close of the sacrifice, the priests gathered together the ashes of these victims, and scattered them upwards in the air, with the view, probably, that where any atom of this dust was carried, a blessing might be entailed. The like was, therefore, done by Moses, though with a different intention, and to a more certain effect .- Bryant.

+ By plagues, in this place, Exod. ix. 14. is not meant, that God would send all the plagues which he afterwards inflicted successively, but those which attended this plague from heaven, as hail,

thunder, lightning, and rain.

‡ Here God shows that he wanted not power to destroy Pharaoh and his subjects for oppressing his people Israel; but that he reserved him for greater punishment.

^{*} As the Egyptians were celebrated for their medical skill, and their physicians were held in the highest repute, the sixth plague,-the infliction of boils accompanied with blains (Exod. ix. 8-12.), which neither their deities could avert, nor the art of man alleviate, would further show the vanity of their gods. Aaron and Moses were ordered to take ashes of the furnace, and to scatter them towards heaven, that they might be wafted over the face of the country. This was a significant command. The ashes were to be taken from that fiery furnace, which in the Scripture was used as a type of the slavery of the Israelites, and of the cruelty which they experienced in Egypt. (Deut. iv. 20.) The process has still a further allusion to an idolatrous and cruel rite, which was common among

I have reserved thee to show my power | produced, which covered the ground with upon, and by the judgments I shall inflict upon him, I will publish my name to all the world. Oppress not, nor detain my people; for if thou dost, to-morrow by this time, unless thou submittest thyself, I will send such a storm of hail from heaven upon Egypt, as never was known since it was a nation. And that thou mayest not lose what cattle the murrain hath left, which being not in the field escaped that plague, send thy servants, and let them drive them under shelter; for upon every man and beast, which shall be found in the field, the storm shall fall, and they shall surely die.'

So heedless as well as impious was Pharaoh, that even this declaration could not induce to preserve himself, or his people: but some of them, who had been witnesses of the dreadful wrath of God, made a prudent use of the divine caution, and housed their cattle in time, by which means they were preserved.*

The time appointed being come, Moses attended the hardened king, and to convince him of the truth of what he had threatened him with, waved his wand in the air, which soon began to murmur in imperfect sounds, till full charged clouds with impetuous force burst and discharged themselves in such terrible peels of thunder, as shook the whole frame of nature. This was succeeded by a stony shower of monstrous hail,+ such as winter never yet

the scattered ruins of trees and houses, and the dead bodies of men and beasts.

Nor did the divine vengeance stop here; the heavens became a body of liquid fire, which darting on the ground, glided over the waters, and filled every place with dreadful horror.

This shocked the haughty tyrant; who seeing nature, as he imagined, ready to dissolve, melted into penitence, and confessed himself guilty.

But this being an act of necessity, not of virtue, it died with his fear, which Moses foresaw; for when Pharaoh begged him to intercede to God for him, and to remove this plague, Moses told him he would answer his request, but assured him he knew he did not mean sincerely; and that his repentance was only the effect of his fright. ‡

* It is said of those that secured their cattle by housing them before the storm, that 'they feared the Lord;' which implies not a reverential fear, but a servile fear, into which they had been terrified by the judgments God had inflicted on them.

try. In Cheshire and Lancashire, in 1697, a storm of hail for about sixty miles in length, did extensive damage by killing birds and small animals, knocking down men and horses, &c. And Brown mentions a storm in Hertfordshire, whose stones were from ten to fourteen inches in circumference, Jehovah says to Job, 'Hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war, Job xxxviii. 22, 23. While God has such artillery at command, how soon may he desolate a country or a world!

I He saw his cattle struck dead with a sudden contagion; he saw his sorcerers (after their contestation with God's messengers) struck with a scab in their very faces, and yet his heart is not struck. Who would think it possible, that any soul could be secure in the midst of such variety and frequence of judgments? These very plagues have not more wonder in them than their success hath. To what a height of obduration will sin lead a man, and of all sins, incredulity! Amidst all these storms Pharaoh sleepeth, till the voice of God's mighty thunders, and hail mixed with fire. roused him up little. Now as betwixt sleeping and waking, he start up and says, 'God is righteous, I am wicked. Moses, pray for us;' and presently lays down as head again. God hath no sooner done thundering than he hath done fear-ing. All this which you never find him careful to prevent any one evil, but desirous still to shift it off, when he feels it; never holds constant to any good motion; never prays for himself, but care-lessly wills Moses and Aaron to pray for him; never yields God his whole demand, but higgleth horrible darkness, there fell a shower of hailstones | like some hard chapman, that would get a release

[†] This plague demonstrated that neither Osiris, who presided over fire, nor Isis, who presided over water, could protect the fields and the climate of Egypt from the thunder, the rain, and the hail of Jehovah. These phenomena were of extremely rare occurrence at any period of the year; they now fell at a time when the air was most calm and serene. Bryant.-Though this was a preternatural storm, there have been many of a natural kind that have proved exceedingly destructive. Mezerny informs us that in Italy, in 1510, after a which destroyed most of the animals in the coun- with the cheapest. - Hall.

Of this the Lord, as he had done before, gave Moses notice: 'I have hardened his heart,* and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these my wonders

* Several things are said in scripture to be done by God, which are only permitted by him to come to pass in their ordinary course and pro-cedure: and thus God may be said to harden Pharaoh's heart, only because he did not interpose, but suffered him to be carried, by the bent of his own passions, to that inflexible obstinacy, which proved his ruin. That Moses, to whom God used these expressions concerning Pharaoh, understood them in this sense, is evident from many parts of his behaviour to him, and especially from his earnestly entreating him to be persuaded, and to let the people go. Had Moses known, or ever thought, that God had doomed Pharaoh to unavoidable ruin, it had been an unwarrantable presumption in him to have persuaded him to have avoided it: but that Moses, with all possible appli-cation, endeavoured to make an impression upon Pharaoh for his good, is manifest from this passage, 'glory over me,' i. e. do me the honour to believe me, when I shall entreat for thee, and for thy servants; wherein he makes an earnest address to Pharaoh, to induce him to be persuaded to part with the people, which he certainly never would have done, had he been satisfied that God himself had prevented his compliance, on purpose to bring him to ruin. It is farther to be observed, therefore, that, not only in the Hebrew, but in most other languages, the occasion of an action, and what in itself has no power to produce it, is very often put for the efficient cause thereof. Thus, in the case before us, God sends Moses to Pharaoh, and Moses in his presence does such miraculous works as would have had an effect upon any other: but because he saw some of the miracles imitated by the magicians; because the plagues which God sent came gradually upon him, and by the intercession of Moses were constantly removed; he thence took occasion, instead of being soft-ened by this alternative of mercy and judgment, to become more sullen and obdurate. Pharaoh,' as the text tells, 'saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunder ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart.' The mercy of God, which should have led him to repentance, had a contrary effect upon him, and made him more obstinate; 'for an hardened heart,' as Bishop Patrick expresses it, 'is neither cut by compunction, nor softened by any sense of pity. It is neither moved by entreaties, nor yields to threatenings, nor feels the smart of scourges. It is ungrateful to benefactors, treacherous to counsels, sullen under judgments, fearless in dangers, forgetful of things past, negligent of things present, and improvident for the future;' all which bad qualities seem to have concentred in Pharaoh. For whatever might have contributed to his obduration at first, it is plain that, in the event, even when the magicians owned a divine power in what they saw done, and were quite confounded when they felt themselves smitten with the boils, and might thereupon very likely persuade him to surrender; he is so far from relenting, that he

before them, and that thou mayest tell in the hearing of thy sons, and the Israelites to succeeding generations, what prodigies I have wrought in Egypt, that ye may all know that I am the Lord, the almighty Jehovah. Wherefore go to Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Why dost thou persist in thy obstinacy? Let my people go that they may serve me, or I will bring the locusts into thy land to-morrow, which shall come in such swarms, as shall cover the surface of the earth, and devour all the products of it that have escaped the former plagues. And this shall prove such a plague as none of thy predecessors ever saw.'

Having thus delivered the will of the Almighty, his servant Moses retired, which the courtiers perceiving, and fearing he was gone to call down more plagues upon them, very roughly accosted their king, desiring him to let the Israelites go to serve their God, lest he destroy them all for his obstinacy. Their importunity prevailed more than God's threats and judgments; therefore sending for Moses and Aaron, he told them they might go and serve their God; but only the men, not women or children Moses insisted upon all the Israelites going, young and old, sons and daughters; nay, and their flocks and herds: 'For we must hold a feast,' says he, 'to the mighty Jehovah, and all must be at it.' This put Pharaoh out of temper, for he looked upon this demand as very insolent; therefore he bade them look to it, and consider well what they insisted on, and in a very threatening manner dismissed them.

The servant of God being again repulsed, another judgment was inflicted on the miserable subjects of an infidel king; for

does not so much as ask a removal of the plague. It was therefore entirely agreeable to the rules of divine justice, when nothing would reclaim this wicked king; when even that which wrought upon the ministers of Satan, made no impression upon him, to let his crime become his punishment, and to leave him to 'eat the bitter fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices.'—Stackhouse.

out his hand with the rod in it, and im- storms of winter had invaded it. mediately a scorching hot wind * blew all that day and the night following, which by devouring locusts, + which left the earth as

Moses by the divine command stretched naked and depopulated, as if the northern happy product of the fertile Nile, and all that bountiful nature afforded, was carried next morning brought endless legions of off by these airy pillagers. Pharaoh began to be a little more sensibly touched

* Our translation has east wind; the Vulgate, a burning wind; the Septuagint, a south wind,which opinion I follow, (though the Jews will unanimously have it to be an east wind,) because the south parts of Africa were most infested with locusts, where they are in some places the chief food of the inhabitants.

† They are like the creature which we properly call a grasshopper. Wonderful are the accounts which authors report of these kinds of armies of locusts, and of the order and regularity of their marches. Aldronandus and Fincilius say, that in the year of our Lord 852, they were seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in the manner of a formed army, divided into several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested; that the captain marched a day's journey before the rest, to choose the most opportune place for their camp: that they never removed till sun rising; at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do; that at last having done great mischief wheresoever they passed, after prayers made to God, they were driven by a violent wind into the Belgic ocean, and there drowned; but being cast again by the sea upon the shore, caused a great pestilence in the country. Some add, that they covered an hundred and forty acres of land at a time. St Jerome upon Joel speaks thus: 'When the armies of locusts came lately into these parts and filled all the air, they flew in so great order, that slates in a pavement cannot be laid more regularly, neither did they stir one inch out of their ranks.' number of locusts were seen and taken near London in 1748, which measured from two to four inches long.-Fleetwood.

The locust is one of the most terrible scourges with which the incensed Majesty of heaven chastises a guilty world. In some regions of the east, the whole earth is at times covered with this creature for the space of several leagues, often to the depth of four, sometimes of six or seven inches. Their approach, which causes a noise like the rushing of a torrent, darkens the horizon, and so enormous is their multitude, it hides the light of the sun, and casts an awful gloom like that of an eclipse over the field. Major Moore, when at Poonah, had the opportunity of seeing an immense army of these animals, which ravaged the Mahratta country, and was supposed to have come from Arabia. "The column they composed," says he, "extended five hundred miles; and so compact was it when on the wing, that like an eclipse, it completely hid the sun, so that no shadow was cast by any object;" and some lofty tombs distant from his residence not two hundred yards, were rendered quite invisible. The noise they make in browsing on the trees and herbage, may be heard at a great distance, and resembles

the rattling of hail, or the noise of an army foraging in secret. The inhabitants of Syria have observed that locusts are always bred by too mild winters, and that they constantly come from the deserts of Arabia. When they breed, which is in the month of October, they make a hole in the ground with their tails, and having laid three hundred eggs in it, and covered them with their feet, expire; for they never live above six months and a half. Neither rains nor frost, however long and severe, can destroy their eggs; they continue till spring, and, hatched by the heat of the sun, the young locusts issue from the earth about the middle of April. Wherever their innumerable bands direct their march, the verdure of the country, though it resembled before the paradise of God, almost instantaneously disappears. The trees and plants, stripped of their leaves, and reduced to their naked boughs and stems, cause the dreary image of winter to succeed in an instant to the rich scenery of spring; and the whole country puts on the appearance of being burnt. Fire itself de-yours not so fast; nor is a vestige of vegetation to be found when they again take their flight to produce similar disasters. In a few hours they eat up every green thing, and consign the miserable inhabitants of the desolated regions to inevitable famine. Many years are not sufficient to repair the desolation which these destructive insects produce. When they first appear on the frontiers of the cultivated lands, the husbandmen, if sufficiently numerous, sometimes divert the storm by their gestures and their cries, or they strive to repulse them by raising large clouds of smoke, but frequently their herbs and wet straw fail them; they then dig a variety of pits and trenches, all over their fields and gardens, which they fill with water, or with heath, stubble, and other combustible matter, which they set on fire upon the approach of the enemy. But they are all to no purpose, for the trenches are quickly filled, and the fires extinguished, by infinite swarms succeeding one another; and forming a bed on their fields of six or seven inches in thickness. The southerly winds waft them over the Mediterranean, where they perish in so great quantities, that when their car cases are cast on the shore, they infect the air for several days to a considerable distance. In a state of putrefaction, the stench emitted from their bodies is scarcely to be endured; the traveller, who crushes them below the wheels of his waggon, or the feet of his horses, is reduced to the necessity of washing his nose with vinegar, and holding his handkerchief, dipped in it, continually to his nos-

One of the most grievous calamities ever inflicted by the locust, happened to the regions of Africa in the time of the Romans, and fell with peculiar weight on those parts which were subject to their with this plague than any of the former; for he plainly foresaw that the destruction of the fruits of the earth must in time prove the destruction of man and beast; therefore calling hastily for Moses and Aaron, he in a more suppliant manner than usual addressed himself to them: 'I have indeed offended Jehovah, your God, in refusing to obey his command, and you, in breaking my word so often with you; forgive me this offence, and entreat your God to avert this judgment, that I and my people perish not by devouring famine.

Moses answered his request, and once

empire. An immense number of locusts covered the whole country, consumed every plant and every blade of grass in the field, without sparing the roots, and the leaves of the trees, with the tendrils upon which they grew. These being exhausted, they penetrated with their teeth the bark, however, bitter, and even correded the dry and however bitter, and even corroded the dry and solid timber. After they had accomplished this terrible destruction, a sudden blast of wind dispersed them into different portions, and after tossing them awile in the air, plunged their innumerable hosts into the sea. But the deadly scourge was not then at an end, the raging billows threw up enormous heaps of their dead and corrupted Godies upon that long extended coast, which produced a most insupportable and poisonous stench. This soon brought on a pestilence, which affected every species of animals; so that birds, and sheep, and cattle, and even the wild beasts of the field, perished in great numbers; and their carcasses, being soon rendered putrid by the foulness of the air, added greatly to the general corruption. The destruction of the human species was horrible; in Numidia, where at that time Micipsa was king, eighty thousand persons died; and in that part of the sea-coast which bordered upon the region of Carthage and Uties, two hundred thousand are said to have been carried off by this pestilence.—The Jews were allowed to eat locusts; and when sprinkled with salt, and fried, they are not unlike our fresh water cray fish. Many nations in the East, as the Indians of the Bashee islands, the Tonquinese, and the inhabitants of Madagascar, make no scruple to eat these insects, of which they have innumerable swarms, and prefer them to the finest fish. The Arabs feed on them to this day, and prepare them for use in the following manner: they grind them to flour in their hand-mills, or powder them in stone mortars. This flour they mix with water to the consistency of dough, and make thin cakes of it, which they bake like other bread on a heated girdle; and this, observes Hasselquist, serves instead of bread to support life for want of something better. At other times they boil them in water, and afterwards stew them with butter, and make a sort of frieassee, which has no bad taste.- Paxton's Script. Illust.

with this plague than any of the former; for he plainly foresaw that the destruction of the fruits of the earth must in time prove the destruction of man and beast; therefore calling hastily for Moses and sea.*

This plague thus removed, Pharaoh returned to his former obstinacy and contempt of God's commands, and refused to let the Israelites go.

CHAPTER III.

The plague of darkness.—Death of the first-born threatened.—Institution of the passover.— Late threatening fulfilled.—Expulsion of the Israelites,—The first-born devoted to the Lord.—God directs the Israelites by an extraordinary token in their passage out of Egypt.—The Israelites are pursued by Pharaoh, who, together with his host, are drowned in the Red sea.—The Israelites praise Goa for their deliverance.

ALL these methods proving ineffectual to reduce Pharaoh to obedience to the divine command, God bade Moses stretch forth his hand towards heaven, that there might be darkness over the land of Egypt, so thick that it might be felt. †

* The sea of Suph, or the Red sea, lies between Arabia on the east, and Egypt and Abyssinia on the west, and is in length about 1400 miles. It is by some thought to have been called the sea of Suph, or the weedy sea, because of the great quantity of reeds or sea-wrack found at its bottom, and on its shores. Others, however, and among them is Bruce, think it derived its name from the great quantity of coral found in it. Pliny says, it betained the name of the Red sea, in Greek Erythrea, from a king called Erythros, who reigned in Arabia, and whose tomb was seen in the island Tyrine, or Agyris. Several learned men believe, that this king Erythros is Esau, or Edom; Edom, in Hebrew, signifying red or ruddy, as Erythros does in Greek. But the dwelling of Edom was east of Canaan, towards Bozre; and Calmet is therefore of opinion, that this name was not given it till after the Idumeans, the descendants of Edom, had spread themselves westward as far as the Red sea. It might then receive the name of the sea of Edom, which the Greeks rendered Thalassa Erythrea, or the Red sea.

† So the Septuagint and most translations render it. Some will have this to be a hyperbol calexpression, to set forth the excess of this plague; though whether this darkness was really in the air, or only in their eyes, which might be blinded for a time; or whether a suspension of hight from the act of illumination in that country; or whether it

and immediately such solid clouds of darkness invaded the sky, that nature at once seemed to be involved in one dreadful eclipse; the sun no longer encouraged the lower world with his cheerful beams; the moon, with the stars, no more illuminated the darkened air; and all things put on the dismal aspect of death, as if nature were returning to her original chaos.

This scene of horror lasted for three days, which so affected the haughty king, that though he had long stood unmoveable against the threatenings and judgments of God; yet now fearing a universal dissolution, and frighted at the continual terrors of this long night, * he began to relent a

were from a black, thick and damp vapour, which possessed all the air, it is impossible to determine.-As the Egyptians betrayed an undue reverence for the sun and light; so they showed a like veneration for night and darkness: regarding them as real, sensible, substantial beings; and giving them a creative power. They were therefore very justly condemned to undergo a palpable and coercive darkness; such as prevented all intercourse for three days. In short, they suffered a preternatural deprivation of light, which their luminary Osiris could not remedy; and they were punished with that essential night, which they so foolishly had imagined, and at last found realised.—Bryant.

* It is the opinion of several, that during this three days' darkness, the Egyptians were frighted with terrible visions and spectres; which opinion is very much strengthened in Wisdom, xvii. 2-19. 'The Egyptians were shut up in their houses, the prisoners of darkness: and were fettered with the bonds of a long night. They were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness, being horribly as- forth, not as abject slaves, but as triumphant contonished and troubled with strange apparitions; for neither might the corner that held them keep them from fear; but noises as if waters falling down sounded about them; and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances. No power of the fire could give them light-only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself very dreadful; for being much terrified, they thought the things which they saw to be worse than the sight they saw not. For though no terrible thing did scare them, yet being scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents, they died for fear: for whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a labourer in the field, lie was overtaken; for they were all bound with one chain of darkness. Whether it were a whistling wind, or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen of tripping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains, these things made them to swoon for fear.' Undoubtedly from such unusual darkness they thought the whole order of the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from

Moses obeyed the heavenly command, little, and calling for Moses, said to him, 'Ye may go with your little ones, and serve the Lord; but for my security, I would have you leave your flocks and herds behind you.'

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As this was not absolutely consistent with the divine command, Moses would not deign to accept it; assuring him that it was the express command of their God to remove with all their substance; and that they knew not in what manner they were to offer sacrifice to their God, till they came to the wilderness.

The haughty tyrant, incensed at his non-compliance with what he himself esteemed a very great indulgence, commanded him to be gone; and assured him, that if ever he appeared before him again, it should cost him his life.

Moses took him at his word, and promised never more to see his face; but before he left his presence, he denounced this judgment to him: 'Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I enter Egypt, and all the first-born of the land shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that should succeed him in the throne, to the firstborn of the servant in the mill; + and all the first born of beasts shall die.'

the world to be overset and dissolved .- The Israelites might now have marched off unmolested: but it was the Lord's pleasure that they should go querors.

+ The people of the East commonly make use of hand-mills. Chardin remarks that the persons employed in grinding are generally female slaves, who are least regarded, or are least fit for any thing else: for the work is extremely laborious, and esteemed the lowest employment about the house. Most of their corn is ground by these little mills, although they sometimes make use of large mills, wrought by oxen or camels. Almost every family grind their wheat and barley at home, having two portable millstones for that purpose; of which the uppermost is turned round by a small handle of wood or iron, that is placed in the rim. When this stone is large, or expedition is required, a second person is called in to assist; and as it is usual for the women only to be concerned in this employment, who seat themselves over against each other, with the millstone be-tween them, we may see the propriety of the ex-pression in the declaration of Moses: 'And all

jects with the greater fear of this judgment, he told them there should be such great lamentations through all Egypt as never was known before. And to convince them of his care and indulgence of his own people, he told the Egyptians that not the least harm should befall the Israelites.

Though the king still bid him defiance, to let him see he despised his threats, he told him, he would so humble his subjects with the succeeding plague, that even his counsellors and prime ministers of state should come and fall down at his feet and entreat him and the Israelites to be gone. And after that, said Moses, I will go out.

Having thus delivered his last message to the king of Egypt with a more than usual warmth of zeal, he took his leave.

As the chosen people of God were not only oppressed in their persons, but also in their property, by the tyranny of the

the first-born of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill.' The manner in which the hand-mills are worked, is well described by Dr Clarke, in his travels: 'Scarcely had we reached the apartment prepared for our reception, when, looking from the window into the court yard belonging to the house, we beheld two women grinding at the mill, in a manner most forcibly illustrating the saying of our Saviour: 'Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left.' The two women, seated upon the ground opposite to each other, held between them two round flat stones, such as are seen in Lapland, and such as in Scotland are called querns. In the centre of the upper stone was a cavity for pouring in the corn; and by the side of this, an upright wooden handle for moving the stone. As this operation began, one of the women opposite received it from her companion, who pushed it towards her, who again sent it to her companion; thus communicating a rotatory motion to the upper stone, their left hands being all the while employed in supplying fresh corn, as fast as the bran and flour escaped from the sides of the machine. 'At the earliest dawn of the morning,' says Mr Forbes, 'in all the Hindoo towns and villages, the hand-mills are at work, when the menials and widows grind meal for the daily consumption of the family: this work is always performed by women, who resume their task every morning, es-pecially the forlorn Hindoo widows, divested of every ornament and with their heads shaved, degraded to almost a state of servitude.' - Script. Illust.

And to possess Pharaoh and his sub- | Egyptians, it pleased the Lord to encourage his servant Moses to support them in their deliverance from bondage, to promise them favour with their former oppressors, and instruct him to borrow of them their most valuable commodities.

> It was on the fourteenth day of the first month * that Moses took his leave of Pharaoh: and God, having predetermined his people's deliverance at this time, had instituted the passover some days before, and given direction to Moses how it should be observed; which was after this manner.

> Every family of Israel, or if the family was too little, two neighbouring families joining together, was on the tenth day of this month to take a lamb or kid, and shut it up till the fourteenth day of this month; and then it was to be killed.

> The lamb or kid must be a male of the first year, and without blemish; -a type of Christ, who was perfectly innocent. When it was killed, they were to take a bunch of hyssop,+ and dipping it in the blood, which for that end was preserved in a vessel, they were to wipe the upper door-post, and the side-posts of the outer door of every house where they did eat it;

^{*} The Israelites, till they had been captives in Babylon, which was about eight hundred years after they came out of Egypt, counted their months without any name according to their number, the first, second, third month, &c. And before their coming out of Egypt, they began their years in that month which was afterwards called Tisri, which took in part of the seventh and part of the eighth month with us, and they continued always after to begin their year with that month for civil affairs, according to which computation, that month, which was afterwards Nisan, in which God delivered Israel out of Egypt, was their seventh. And this Nisan answers to part of those two months, which from the heathen Romans are commonly called March and April.

⁺ Hyssop is mentioned as one of the smallest of herbs. It has a bitter taste, and grows on the mountains near Jerusalem. This plant is extremely well adapted for sprinkling. It literally grows in bunches, putting out abundance of suckers from a single root. It grows about a foot and a half high; and at a distance on both sides of its stock it pushes out longish leaves, and carries a blossom on the top of the stem, of an azure colour and like an ear of corn.

and they were not to stir out of the house land of Egypt, from the first-born of till the next morning.

This was done to the intent, that when the angel of the Lord should go from house to house through all Egypt, to slay the first-born of both man and beast of the Egyptians, he seeing the blood smeared on the door-posts, might pass over those houses, wherein the Israelites were eating the lamb or kid, without doing them any hurt: and from the angel's thus passing over their houses, this institution was called the Passover. The lamb or kid was to be eaten neither raw nor sodden, but roasted with fire, and to be dressed whole: nor might a bone of it be broken. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs, * in memory of the severe bondage they had undergone in Egypt. If there remained more than could be eaten, it was to be burnt; and no stranger might eat of it, unless he was circumcised. As to the manner of eating it, at this time only, they were to eat it as in haste, with their clothes on, and their staves in their hands: which ceremony showed their eager desire of deliverance, and their readiness for it.

These precautions being taken in obedience to the divine command, for the preservation of the Israelites, at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born+ in the

Pharaoh, to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; ‡ and all the first-born of the cattle were smitten, as the Lord had that morning denounced to Pharaoh and Moses.

This severe stroke of divine vengeance at length alarmed the obdurate Pharaoh and blinded subjects, who waked each other with their dismal cries, 5 and the

25th came the second plague of frogs, which was removed the day following, and on the 27th, that of the lice. About the 28th Moses threatened the fourth plague of flies, and inflicted them on the 29th. On the 1st of the next month, which was afterwards made the first month of the year, he foretold the fifth plague of the murrain, and inflicted it the next; and on the 3d, the sixth plague of boils, which fell upon the Egyptians themselves. About the 4th day he foretold the seventh plague of thunder and hail, and on the 5th inflicted it. On the 7th, he threatened the eighth plague of locusts, and having sent them the day following, removed them on the ninth. On the 10th he instituted the feast of the passover, and brought upon Egypt the ninth plague, of darkness, which lasted for three days; and on the 14th, he foretold the tenth, viz. the destruction of all their first-born, which came to pass the night following. seems to be a reasonable period of time; and the gradual increase of these judgments is somewhat remarkable. The four first plagues were loathsome, rather than fatal, to the Egyptians; but after that of the flies, came the murrain, which chiefly spent its rage upon the cattle: the boils and blains reached both man and beast, though there was still a reserve for life. The hail and locusts extended, in a great measure, even to life itself; the first by an immediate stroke, and both consequently by destroying the fruits of the earth. That of darkness added consternation to their minds, and lashes to their consciences; and when all this would not reclaim, at length came the decisive blow; first the excision of the first-born, and then the drowning of the incorrigible tyrant and all his host. 'Great and marvellous are thy works. O Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! - Stackhouse.

† That is, those meaner servants, that are put to grinding, as Samson afterwards was, when he had lost at once both his eyes and liberty.

§ The Egyptians of all nations upon earth were most frantic in their grief. When any person died in a family, all the relations and all the friends of the deceased co-operated in a scene of sorrow. And the process was to quit the house; at which the women, with their hair loose, and their bosoms bare, ran wild about the streets. The men likewise, with their apparel equally disordered, kept them company; all shricking, and howling, and beating themselves, as they passed along. This was upon the decease of an individual: but when into blood, which ended seven days after. On the must have been in a great measure vacated, and

* These bitter herbs, according to the Jews, were probably such as lettuce, endive or cichory, chervel, and the like.

[†] The word bekor signifies sometimes a person of some eminence or excellence, as well as the first-born: and therefore it may not be an unreasonable supposition, that, where a family had no first-born, the principal, or most eminent person, was smitten with death,—which is certainly better than to imagine, with some, both Jewish and Christian interpreters, that the words of Moses are only applicable to a house that had a firstborn, or with St Austin, that providence did so order it at this time that every house had a firstborn. Since this however is the concluding judgment which God sent upon the Egyptians, it may not be improper here to inquire a little how long Moses was in working all these miracles. According to Archbishop Usher then-who has included them all within the space of one month-we may suppose, that, about the 18th day of the sixth month, was sent the plague of the waters turned there was one dead in every family, every house

horror of the night added to their confu- that some heavy judgment would attend sion; the expiring groans of their beloved first-born deeply affected them, and they expected a succession of death upon themselves; Pharaoh, hoping to avert an untimely death, in haste sent for Moses and Aaron, and commanded them to be gone with all speed. 'Get you forth,' says he, from among my people, both you and the children of Israel, and go serve your God as ye have said; and take your flocks and your herds, as ye demanded, and be gone: I will stand no longer on terms with you; only pray for me, that this plague may go no further.' Nor were the people less importunate for them to be gone; for they concluded, if the Israelites tarried any longer among them, that they should all die.

Moses, having by God's express command directed the children of Israel to borrow of their. Egyptian neighbours jewels of silver and gold, and the Lord having disposed the Egyptians to lend them what they asked for, they by these means spoiled the Egyptians of their most valuable things:* nay, so fearful were they

their longer continuance among them, that they forced them away, not suffering them to finish their bread, but obliging them to tie up their dough in their clothes, and carry it away on their backs unbaked.

The Lord having thus avenged on the Egyptians the obstinacy of their king, in detaining his people in bondage, they now on a sudden thrust them out, as God had foretold, and drove them away in great haste.

So punctual were the ancient servants of God in complying with the request of their dying friends or relations, or any who had signalized themselves in the service of the faithful, that we find men, notwithstanding the hasty departure of the Israelites, did not forget to take the bones of Joseph, which he, dying in the faith of their deliverance, had solemnly engaged the children of Israel to carry up out of Egypt with them, and which had now lain entombed there more than a hundred and forty years.

The place of general rendezvous for the Israelites was Rameses, the chief city of Goshen; from whence, on the fifteenth

the streets quite filled with mourning. Hence we may be assured that those violent emotions were general; and at the same time shocking past all imagination. The suddenness of the stroke, and the immediate and universal cries of death at midnight, that particularly awful season, must have filled every soul with horror. It was therefore very truly said by the prophet of God, 'There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt; such as there was none like it' before, 'nor shall be like it any more.'- 'And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and

all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, Exod. xii. 30.—Bryant.

* The word, which our translators render borrow, more properly signifies to ask of one; and what they render to lend, is as literally to give. For the case stood thus between the two nations. The Egyptians had been thoroughly terrified with what had passed, and especially with the last terrible plague upon their first-born, and were now willing to give the Hebrews any thing, or every thing, only to get quit of them. They therefore bribed them to be gone, and courted them with presents, so very profusely, as even to impoverish themselves : but for this the Israelites were not at all culpable, because they only accepted of what the others gave them; and what was freely given, they doubtless had a right to detain.

But suppose that the strict sense of the word was, that they really did borrow many valuable things of the Egyptians; yet it is a truth allowed on all hands, that God, who is the supreme Lord of all things, may, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, transfer the rights of men from one to another. Considering then, that God was now become the king of the Israelites, in a proper and peculiar manner; and considering farther, what insufferable wrongs the king and people of Egypt had done to this people of God, who were now become his peculiar subjects, and proprietary lieges; this act of 'spoiling the Egyptians,"—even in the harshest sense of the word-was, according to the laws of nations, more justifiable than royal grants of letters of mart, or other such like remedies, as kings are accustomed to make use of against other powers that have wronged their subjects, or suffered them to be wronged by those that are under their command, without making a proper restitution. In short, whatever the Hebrews took from the Egyptians, they took, and possessed it by the law of reprisals, that is, by virtue of a special warrant from the Lord himself, who was now become, not their God only, but their peculiar king .- Stackhouse.

day of their first month,* they set forward as regularly as a well-ordered army, being in number about six hundred thousand men, besides children, and marched to With them went a mixed Succoth. multitude that were not Israelites, but strangers of several nations, who, having seen the calamities that Egypt had suffered for Israel's sake, chose rather to seek their fortunes with the Israelites, than tarry in a country almost made desolate.

To perpetuate the remembrance of this glorious display of divine power and goodness in their behalf, God by Moses commanded the people of Israel, that when they should be brought into the land of Canaan, they should set apart, and devote unto the Lord their first-born, both of man and beast, as a token that God, for their sakes, had slain all the first-born in Egypt.+

* This was afterwards called Nisan, and Abib, which takes in part of the first, and part of the second month with us.

The Israelites being to remove from Succoth, the Lord, for their encouragement and security, went before them in the day-time in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, to direct and

crowns, or thereabout, and restores the infant. If the father or mother are of the race of priests, or Levites, they do not redeem their son.—The Hindoos frequently make a vow, and devote to an idol the first-born of a goat and of man. goat is permitted to run wild, as a consecrated ani-mal. A child thus devoted has a lock of hair separated, which at the time appointed is cut off and placed near the idol. Hindoo women some-times pray to Gunga (the Ganges) for children, and promise to devote the first-born to her. Children thus devoted are cast into the Ganges, but are generally saved by the friendly hand of some

strauger .- Calmet and Ward.

The Lord, who makes the clouds his chariots, and darkness his pavilion, was pleased to go before them in a marvellous pile of cloudy vapours, re-sembling a pillar, ascending from their camp. The fame of this strange phenomenon was spread abroad among the nations, who heard that the cloud of the Lord stood above them, and might very well be supposed to move the question, 'Who is this that comes up from the wilderness like pil-lars of smoke?' For this cloud differed so much from all others that ever were seen, as it may justly be reckoned a complication of miracles. It was miraculous that its form was never changed, when there is nothing more variable than the appearance of the ordinary clouds that sail through the airy regions. It was miraculous that it should always maintain its station over the tabernacle, when other clouds are carried about with tempests, and driven with fierce winds, from the one extremity of heaven to the other. It was miraculous that it should preserve its consistency forty years; whereas all other clouds are dissipated by the wind, exhaled by the sun, or dissolved in rain and dew, and in a very short time are blotted from the face of the sky. It was miraculous that this cloud should move in such peculiar direction, as it had been endued with instinct and intelligence; for it was carried about by his counsels in a more immediate way than can be said of the other clouds of heaven. But especially it was miraculous, that, contrary to the nature of all other clouds, it should be brighter by night than by day, when it had the appearance of the shining of a flaming fire.—It was their guide that went before them in the vast pathless desert, where they wandered in a solitary way. It was their guard that protected them, when their Egyptian pursuers were pressing on their rear; for it removed on that occasion from their van, and went behind them, forbidding by its darkness the approach of the hostile army all that night on which they travelled through the flood on foot. On this occasion, we are told, that the Lord looked through the pillar, and troubled the Egyptian host at the hour of midnight. 'The waters saw thee, O God; the waters saw thee: they were afraid: the deeps also were troubled

⁺ If a man had many wives, he was obliged to offer the first-born son by each one of them to the Lord. The first-born were offered at the temple, and redeemed for five shekels. The firstling of a clean beast was offered at the temple, not to be redeemed, but to be killed; an unclean beast, a horse, an ass, or a camel, was either redeemed, or exchanged; an ass was redeemed by a lamb, or five shekels: " not redeemed, it was killed. Commentators hold that the first-born of dogs were killed, because they were unclean; and that nothing was given for them to the priests, because there was no trade or commerce in them. The ceremonies of the Jews for the redemption of their first-born, are as follows: if the child be a boy, when he is thirty days old, a descendant of Aaron is sent for, who is most agreeable to the father; and the company being met, the father brings gold or silver in a cup or bason. The child is then put into the priest's hands, who asks the mother Aloud, Whether this boy is hers? She answers, Yes. He adds, 'Have you never had any other child, male or female; no untimely birth, or miscarriage?' She answers, No. 'If so,' says the priest, 'this child, as the first-born, belongs to me.' Then turning to the father, he says, 'If you desire to have him you must redeem him? 'This gold and this silver, replies the father, 'is offered to you for that purpose only.' The priest, turning to the assembly, says, "This child, as the first-born, is therefore mine, according to this law,-those who are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation for the money of five shekels,' &c.—'but I am content with this in exchange.' He then takes two gold

guide them; and though the Philistines | country was the nearest for them to pass; yet, lest they, seeing them with an armed force oppose their passage, should repent of their deliverance, and wilfully turn back to Egypt, he led them about through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea, and marching to Etham they encamped there on the borders of the wilderness, which took its name from that place. From thence drawing them down more to the Red sea, he caused them to encamp there, between the straits of the mountains, in sight of the sea. This was the divine pleasure, that the almighty Jehovah might more fully triumph over the Egyptian tyrant: for he had told Moses, that Pharaoh would say, they were entangled in the wilderness; and that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, that he should pursue them, and be destroyed. This succeeded accordingly: for, after the Egyptians had buried their dead firstborn, Pharaoh, being told that the Israelites were gone, and concluding, from their long and speedy marches, that they fled indeed, repented that he had let them go: his bounty in dismissing the enslaved Israelites scarce survived his deliverance from the angel's slaughtering hand, and rage and revenge succeeded to his late fear and grief for the death of the firstborn: he forgot the Almighty power,

The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heavens; thy lightnings lightened the world, the earth trembled and shook. Thy way was in the sea, thy path in the mighty waters, and thy footsteps were not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' It was their candle that enlightened their darkness; that smoothed the rugged brow of the night, and served to abate the horrors of the wilderness after the sun was set; for it reserved its shining appearance to the season when the Israelites were most in need of its cheerful aspect. It was their umbrella or screen to shade them from the sultry beams of the sun in that torrid wilderness. A most grateful service! And whereas an apostle speaks of our fathers being baptized in the cloud, it would seem, that on some occasions, this beneficial cloud refreshed the Israelites, by shedding kind dews upon their camp .-M' Ewon.

that by a succession of plagues had so lately afflicted him and his people, and, regardless of the danger of provoking it again, blindly pursued his own fate, instead of the Israelites.

Raising all the force which the shortness of the time would admit, he headed them, and immediately pursued the departing Israelites, in order to enslave them deeper.

He had with him six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt besides, that could be got ready at so short a warning, with their commanders, and horsemen, * with which he pursued them; and on the sixth day, after their departure out of Egypt, came up with them, and found them encamped by the sea; so that, as he had proposed to himself, he found the Israelites beset on every side, the sea in front, huge mountains on their flank, and his own army in their rear.

The sight of this army, and their old oppressor at the head of them, struck terror into the poor Israelites, who, soon forgetting their new-gotten liberty, betrayed a servile mind, and envied the slavish condition they but lately deplored.

^{*} Josephus, who loves to magnify matters when they tend to the glory of his countrymen, as well as conceal what would occasion their disgrace, tells us that the Egyptian army consisted of 600 chariots, 50,000 horse, and 200,000 foot: but how so large a number could be raised in so short a time, or what need there was of so vast an armament against a weak and defenceless people, is hardly conceivable. As therefore we may presume, that the haste which the Egyptians were in lest the Israelites should get out of the straits wherein they were entangled, or make their escape some other way, before they came up with them, made them pursue them with chariots and horsemen for the greater expedition; so we may observe, that the chariots they employed in this pursuit are called chosen chariots, which most interpreters imagine to be such as were armed with scythes, which being drawn with horses, and filled with men who threw darts and spears, and other offensive weapons from them, could not but make a strange havoc wherever they came; and the number which the Scripture mentions, under proper captains who might have the direction of them, was enough to destroy all the Israelites, being worn with hard bondage, wearied with marching, destitute of arms, strangers to war, and now encamped in a very disadvantageous situation -Josephus, Ainsworth, and Howell.

of all their imaginary woes, and wished to resume the yoke they had but now shaken off. Long custom had inured them to a state of slavery, and continual servitude of body debased their spirits.

But pious Moses, not resenting their reproachful taunts, but pitying their abject fear, cheered them up with the assurance of God's protection and care, and said, 'The Lord will fight for you, and complete your deliverance; and this numerous army of the Egyptians, which now terrifieth you, shall no more affright or molest you.'

Moses, before this encouraging assurance, had addressed himself to God, who admonished him no more at this juncture to apply himself to him, but to press the murmuring Israelites to move forward, giving him instructions how to secure his people, and afflict their enemies.

The sacred rod, by which Moses had formerly wrought so many miracles, still retained its virtues, as inimitable; but now more fatally destructive: 'Lift up the rod,' saith the Lord, 'and stretch thy hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry land through the midst of the sea: and I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, that they shall pursue them; and there will I get me honour upon the ruin of Pharaoh, and his mighty army.'

To convince the doubting, intimidated Israelites of the peculiar favour and regard which God bore toward them, as his chosen people, the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, in the pillar of the cloud, removed and went behind them, by which means it kept the two camps apart all night; and the cloudy side, being next the Egyptians, cast a darkness towards them; but the fiery side, being next to the Israelites, gave them light.

Israel being thus secured from the terrifying sight of their enemies, Moses waved the sacred rod over the sea, and l

They reproached Moses as the author | immediately a strong east wind blew, and drove the sea back from the land; and, dividing the waters, made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites,* who, under the

> * The rabbins, and many of the ancient fathers, relying on Psal. cxxvi, 13. 'to him which divided the Red sea into parts,' have maintained that the Red sea was so divided as to make twelve passages; that each of the twelve tribes passed through a different passage. But other authors have advanced, that Moses having lived long near the Red sea, in the country of Midian, had observed that it kept its regular ebbing and flowing like the ocean; so that, taking the advantage of the time of the ebb, he led the Hebrews over; but the Egyptians, not knowing the nature of the sea, and rashly entering it just before the return of the tide, were all swallowed up and drowned, as Moses re-lates. Thus the priests of Memphis explained it, and their opinion has been adopted by a great number of moderns, particularly by the learned critic and philologer, John David Michaelis, who in the queries which he sent to the Danish traveller M. Niebuhr, while in Egypt, proposed to him to inquire upon the spot, whether there were not some ridges of rocks where the water was shallow so that an army at particular times may pass over? Secondly, Whether the Etesian winds, which blow strongly all summer from the northwest, could not blow so violently against the sea as to keep it back on a heap; so that the Israelites might have passed without a miracle? and a copy of these queries was left also for Mr Bruce, to join his inquiries likewise, his observations on which are excellent. "I must confess," says he, "however learned the gentlemen were who proposed these doubts, I did not think they merited any attention to solve them. This passage is told us by Scripture to be a miraculous one; and if so, we have nothing to do with natural causes. If we do not believe Moses, we need not believe the transaction at all, seeing that it is from his authority alone we derive it. If we believe in God, that he made the sea, we must believe he could divide it when he sees proper reason; and of that he must be the only judge. It is no greater miracle to divide the Red sea than to divide the river Jordan. If the Etesian winds, blowing from the north-west in summer, could keep up the sea as a wall on the right, or to the south, of fifty feet high, still the difficulty would remain of building the wall on the left hand or to the north. Besides, water standing in that position for a day must have lost the nature of fluid. Whence came that cohesion of particles which hindered that wall to escape at the sides? This is as great a miracle as that of Moses. If the Etesian winds had done this once, they must have repeated it many a time before and since, from the same causes. Yet Diodorus Siculus says the Troglodytes, the indigenous inhabitants of that very spot, had a tradition from father to son, from their very earliest ages, that once this division of the sea did happen there; and that, after leaving its bottom some time dry, the sea again came back, and covered it with great fury. The words of this author are of the most remarkable kind: we cannot

conduct of their great Guide, entered the | marched on, and instead of being terrified sandy plain, and with amazement beheld the till then secret wonders of the deep. Enchanted with the floods, they boldly

think this heathen is writing in favour of revelation: he knew not Moses, nor says a word about Pharaoh and his host; but records the miracle of the division of the sea in words nearly as strong as those of Moses, from the mouths of unbiassed undesigning pagans. Were all these difficulties surmounted, what could we do with the pillar of fire? The answer is, We should not believe it. Why, then, believe the passage at all? We have no authority for the one but what is for the other: it is altogether contrary to the ordinary nature of things; and if not a miracle, it must be a fable."

Still, such sceptical queries have their use; they lead to a stricter investigation of facts, and thereby tend strongly to confirm the veracity of the history they meant to impeach. Thus it appears, from the accurate observations of Niebuhr and Bruce, that there is no ledge of rocks running across the gulf any where, to afford a shallow passage. And the second query, about the Etesian or northerly wind, is refuted by the express mention of a strong easterly wind blowing across, and scooping out a dry passage; not that it was necessary for Omnipotence to employ it there as an instrument, any more than at Jordan; but it seems to be introduced in the sacred history by way of anticipation, to exclude the natural agency that might in after times be employed for solving the miracle; and it is remarkable that the monsoon in the Red sea blows, the summer half of the year from the north, the winter half from the south, neither of which could produce the miracle in question. Wishing to diminish, though not to deny the miracle, Niebuhr adopts the opinion of those who contend for a higher passage near Suez. " For," says he, " the miracle would be less if they crossed the sea there, than near Bedea. But whosoever should suppose that the multitude of the Israelites could be able to cross it here without a prodigy would deceive himself; for even in our days, no caravan passes that way to go from Cairo to Mount Sinai, although it would shorten the journey considerably. The passage would have been naturally more difficult for the Israelites some thousands of years back, when the gulf was prooably larger, deeper, and more extended towards the north; for in all appearance the water has retired, and the ground near this end has been raised by the sands of the neighbouring desert." But it sufficiently appears, even from Niebuhr's own statement, that the passage of the Israelites could not have taken place near Suez: for, I. He evidently confounded the town of Kolsum, the ruins of which he places near Suez, and where he supposed the passage to be made, with the bay of Kolsum, which began about 45 miles lower down; as Mr Bryant has satisfactorily proved, from the astronomical observations of Prolemy and Ulug Beigh, made at Heroum, the ancient head of the gulf.

2. Instead of crossing the sea at or near Ethan,

with the sight of a pursuing enemy, were entertained with the pleasing view of the sea's old spoils, and the treasures of the divided main.

wards along the western shore; and their third station at Pihahiroth, or Bedea, was at least a full day's journey below Ethan, as Mr Bryant has satisfactorily proved from Scripture, (Exod xiv. 2.) And it was this unexpected change in the direction of their march, which intimated an intention in the Israelites to quit Egypt; and the apparently disadvantageous situation in which they were then placed, "entangled in the land, and shut in by the wilderness," with a deep sea in front, the mountains of Attaka on the sides, and the enemy in their rear, that tempted the Egyptians to pursue them through the valley of Bedea, by the direct road from Cairo; who "overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, opposite to Baalzephon."

Niebuhr wonders how the Israelites could suffer themselves to be brought into such a disadvantageous situation, or be led blindfold by Moses to their apparent destruction: " one need only travel with a caravan," says he, " which meets with the least obstacle, viz. a small torrent, to be convinced that the Orientals do not let themselves be led, like fools, by their Caravan Baschi," or leader of the caravan. But the Israelites went out of Egypt with "a high hand," though led by Moses, yet under the visible guidance and protection of "THE LORD GOD of the Hebrews," who went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire; and who, for their encouragement to enter the passage of the sea miraculously prepared for them, removed the cloud which went before the camp of Israel hitherto, and placed it behind them. (Exod. xiv. 8—20.) "And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to the one, but gave light by night to the other; so that the one came not near the other all the night." The preceding elaborate view of this subject furnishes a most clear and satisfactory answer to the cavils of modern intidels.

Various ancient traditions among the heathen historians attest the reality of the miraculous passage of the Red sea by the Israelites; to which we may add that it is manifest from the text of Moses and other sacred authors, who have men-tioned this miraculous passage, that no other account is supportable but that which supposes the Hebrews to cross over the sea from shore so shore, in a vast space of dry ground which was left void by the waters at their retiring. (Exod. xiv. 16, 17, &c.) To omit the numerous allusions in the book of Psalms, Isaiah says (lxiii. 11, &c.) that the Lord divided the waves before his people, that he conducted them through the bottom of the abyss, as a horse is led through the midst of a field. kuk says (iii. 15.), that the Lord made himself a road to drive his chariot and horses across the sea, across the mud of great waters. Lastly, in the apocryphal book of Wisdom we read (xix. 7, 8. x. their second station, the Israelites "turned" south- 17, 18.), that the dry land appeared all on a sudrevenge pursued the tract, and not sus- and a confirmation of the power of their pecting but that they with their chariots Almighty God, who had delivered them and horsemen might safely follow where from inevitable ruin. This created an the Israelites being but footmen, went be- awful reverence in them, not only to God fore, enter in after them to the midst of himself, but his servant Moses their happy the sea. But when in the morning watch* the Lord had looked through the pillar of so many wonders for their preservation fire and cloud upon the Egyptians, and throwing their chariots off the wheels, had disordered their army, the Egyptians saw their error, and said one to another, 'Let us fly from the face of Israel, for Jehovah fighteth for them against us.'+ But it was too late to fly; for Moses at God's command waving the sacred wand again, the sea returned to its strength; and the divided parts suddenly uniting, covered the thirsty bottom, whilst horror and confusion invaded the frighted Egyptians. They heard and saw the roaring waves break loose from their invisible chain, and with helpless speed endeavoured to avoid their relentless fury, but in vain; the mighty God of Jacob will avenge himself on the obstinate infidels, and their ruin shall be a lasting monument of his justice and his vengeance.

Thus did the Lord rescue the Israelites from the king of Egypt and his mighty army; which being cast on the shore, was

The Egyptians actuated by fury and a delightful spectacle to the Israelites, guide, by whose hand God had wrought and safety.

> Being now safely got to shore again, Moses and the Israelites in grateful acknowledgment of their deliverance, sung a triumphant song; in which Miriam the prophetess, sister to Moses and Aaron, joined, taking a timbrel in her hand, and followed by the Israelitish women with timbrels and dances, answered the men. repeatedly and alternately, some parts of the song.

CHAPTER IV.

Dearth of water .- Bitter waters are sweetened. -Dearth of bread.-Provision is sent from heaven .- People again murmur on account of a dearth of water .- Are miraculously supplied .- Israel overcomes Amalek .- Moses entertuins Jethro, and taketh his advice .- God's message from the mount and terrible uppear-

HAVING thus rendered their grateful tribute of praise to their Almighty deliverer, Moses led the children of Israel from the Red sea into the desert of Shur or Etham, §

9 Etham lay at the extremity of the western gulf of the Red sea; and the wilderness, both on

den in a place where water was before; that a free passage was opened in a moment through the midst of the Red sea; and that a green field was seen in the midst of the abyss.—Horne.

* This is reckoned to begin at the third, and

reach to the sixth hour in the morning.

[†] The Jewish historian tells us, that before God let loose the waves upon the Egyptians, fierce winds and tempests, storms of hail and rain, terri-ble thunderings and lightnings, and whatever else could make their condition horrible, were sent down upon them from above; and therefore it is not without good reason, that these words of the Psalmist have been applied to this occasion: 'The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid; the depths also were troubled: the clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy shone upon the ground, the earth was moved, and shook withal. Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters; thou leddest thy people, like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.'

t In the oriental dances, in which the women engage by themselves, the lady of highest rank in the company takes the lead; and is followed by her companions, who imitate her steps, and if she sing, make up the chorus. The tunes are extremely gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfully soft. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her who leads the dance, but always in exact time. This statement may enable us to form a correct idea of the dance, which the women of Israel performed under the direction of Miriam, on the banks of the Red sea. The prophetess, we are told, "took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and dances." She led the dance, while they imitated her steps, which were not conducted according to a set, well known form, as in this country, but extemporaneous .- Paxton's Script. Illus.

in which they marched three days without finding any water; which to so great
a number of people, in so hot a country
and season, must needs be very irksome.
But at length they came to a place where
there was water enough, but so bitter, *
that they could not drink it. This disappointment inflamed their thirst, and increased their dissatisfaction; and though
it was but three or four days since they
so joyfully and thankfully praised God
for their deliverance from the oppressions
of the Egyptians, yet they murmured
against Moses, asking him what they
should drink?

Moses was sensible of the calamity under which they laboured; and fearing they should by their future murmurings provoke the Lord to punish them as they deserved, he straightway addressed himself to him in their behalf; who no sooner heard the complaint, but redressed it; directing Moses to a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they became sweet, and the people satisfied their thirst.

Their pressing wants being thus wonderfully and amply supplied, it might be imagined that after this, and so many former tokens of the interposition of the divine power and goodness in their behalf,

the east and west of the Red sea was called by this name.—Shur lay on the northern side of the Red sea, and consisted of about a fourth part of the wilderness of Etham. they would no longer mistrust the goodness of their covenant-God; but their faith scarcely survived his miracles.

From Marah they marched to Elim, where they found better accommodations; for there were twelve wells of water, and seventy palm, or date trees. †

Here it may be supposed they made some stay; for when they removed from hence and came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, it was the fifteenth day of the second month, which was just a month from the day o which they set forward out of Egypt.

Here again the Israelites fell into a general mutiny against Moses and Aaron. The sight of a barren wilderness, and shortness of provisions, made them distrust God, and break into very indecent expressions; 'Would to God,' cried they in their discontent, 'we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we had plenty of bread and meat; for now ye have brought us into this desert, where we must perish with famine.'

This ungrateful treatment of his servants, the Lord resented, as done to himself, and of which Moses and Aaron made them sensible; for, said they, 'Your murmurings are not only against us, but against the Lord, who hath heard them; and ye shall soon know that it was the Lord that brought you out of Egypt; whose arm is not shortened, but can make a provision for you as miraculous as your deliverance.'

The Lord therefore to awe this mur-

^{*} From the bitterness of the waters, the place took the name of Marah, which signifies bitterness. Most travellers attest that there are several bitter fountains not far from the Red sea; and Dr Shaw fixes these waters at Corondel, a place where there is a small rill, which, unless it be diluted by dews and rain, still continues to be brackish. Carne, a latter traveller, who visited this region a century after Dr Shaw, describing these waters, says, that "the Pool of Marah is of a circular form, about sixty feet round: it gushes forth from a rock at the foot of a barren mountain, and one or two palm trees spread their shade over it. . This pool, the only one found for a great distance around, in spite of its clear and tempting appearance, is brackish and bitter to the taste, offering one of the greatest disappointments to the weary traveller, whose thirst indeed may be quenched, though the hope of a sweet and delicious draught is baffled."— Horne.

[†] Elim, situated in the north skirt of the desert, was esteemed a pleasant and fruitful place, at least in comparison of the barren parts about it. Dr Shaw, who visited this place, says "I saw no more than nine of the twelve wells that are mentioned by Moses; the other three being filled up by those drifts of sand which are common in Arabia. Yet this loss is amply made up by the great increase of the palm trees,—the seventy having propagated themselves into more than two thousand. Under the shade of these trees is the Hummum Mousa—the Bath of Moses—which the inhabitants of Tor have in extraordinary esteem and veneration; acquainting us that it was here that Moses himself and his particular household encamped!"

and providence, having first showed his glory in the cloud, told them by Moses, that at evening they should eat flesh, and in the morning be filled with bread; which he made good by causing quails* to come up so thick in the evening, that they covered the camp, and afforded the Israelites a sufficiency of flesh.

And in the morning, when the dew was gone, there lay upon the ground a little

* The quail is an inhabitant of nearly all countries, and in all is esteemed excellent food. In appearance it is so like the partridge, that it is sometimes called Dwarf Partridge; and, in the manners of the two species, there is a great resemblance. They feed, form their nest, and rear their young ones, nearly in the same way. are, however, in many respects very different. Quails migrate: they are always smaller; and have not a naked space between the eyes, nor the figure of a horse shoe on their breasts. These birds usually sleep during the day, concealed in the tallest grass; lying on their sides, with their legs extended. So very indolent are they that a dog must absolutely run upon them before they are flushed; and when they are forced upon wing, they seldom fly far. Quails are found in several parts of Great Britain; and the time of their migration from this country is August or September. They are supposed to winter in Africa; and they return early in the spring. At their arrival in Alexandria, such multitudes are exposed in the markets for sale, that three or four may sometimes be bought for a medina,—a coin less than three farthings in value. With wind and weather in their favour these birds have been known, in the course of one night, to perform a flight of fifty leagues across the Black sea; a wonderful distance for so short-winged a bird. Such prodigious numbers of quails have sometimes appeared on the western coasts of the kingdom of Naples, that a hundred thousand have, in one day, been caught within the space of three or four miles. Most of these are taken to Rome; where they are in great request, and are sold at high prices. Clouds of quails also alight, in spring, along the coasts of Provence. Here they are sometimes found so exhausted, that for a few of the first days they may be caught with the hand. In some parts of the south of Russia they abound so greatly, that at the time of their migration they are caught by thousands, and sent in casks to Moscow and Petersburgh. Quails are birds of undaunted courage; and their quarrels often terminate in mutual destruction. This irascible disposition induced the ancient Greeks and Romans to fight them with each other. And such favourites were the conquerors, that in one instance Augustus punished a prefect of Egypt with death, for having brought to his table one of these birds which had acquired celebrity for its victeries. - Bingley's Animal Biography.

muring people into a belief of his power | white round thing, as small as the hoar frost, and like coriander seed for shape; which when the Israelites saw, they wondering said one to another, What is this?+ for they knew not what it was. But God was pleased by Moses to give them a direction in the gathering and use of it.

> First, it was to be gathered fresh every morning; all that was gathered was to be spent the same day. And when some of them, either out of curiosity or diffidence, that they might have a reserve, kept some of it till the next morning, it putrefied and stunk. They were to gather it by measure, according to the number of heads in every family.

> On the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, there was none to be found; therefore they were to gather a double portion on the sixth day, and lay it up for the seventh day, which being kept by

⁺ Our translation, and some others, make Moses fall into a plain contradiction in relating this story of the manna, Exod. xvi. 14. which they render thus: 'And when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, It is manna, for they wist not what it was.' But why should they have forsaken the Septuagint, and several authors, both ancient and modern, that have translated this text according to the original? 'The Israelites seeing this, said one to another, What is this? for they knew not what it was.'—There is a vegetable substance called manna which falls in Arabia, in Poland, in Calabria, in mount Libanus, and elsewhere. The most common and the most famous is that of Arabia, which is a kind of condensed honey, found in the summer time on the leaves of trees, on herbs, on the rocks, or the sand of Arabia Petræa. That which is gathered about mount Sinai has a very strong smell, which it receives from the herbs on which it falls. It easily evaporates, insomuch that if thirty pounds of it were kept in an open vessel, hardly ten would remain at the end of fifteen days. Several writers think that the manna with which the Israelites were fed was like that now found in Arabia, and that the only thing that was miraculous in the occurrence was the regularity of the supply, and its cessation on the sabbath. The Jews, however, with the majority of critics, are of opinion that it was a totally different substance from the vegewas a totally different substance from the vegetable manna, and was specially provided by the Almighty for his people. Burckhardt says that in the valley of Ghor (the Jordan) the manna is still found, dropping from the sprigs of several trees, but principally from the Gharrab. It is collected by the Arabs, who make cakes of it, and call it Assal Bayrouk'. Collected 'Assal Beyrouk,' or 'honey of Beyrouk,'-Calmet.

not corrupt.

This was to them instead of bread, and of this they did eat forty years, till they arrived on the borders of Canaan. And as a memorial of it, that after-generations might see the bread with which he had fed their forefathers in the wilderness, God appointed that an omer * of this manna should be put up in a pot, and be laid up before the Lord.

The Almighty not only supplied the wants of the discontented Israelites in the most ample manner; but farther to convince them of his peculiar favour and regard, directed their marches from place to place, and ordered their encampments.

Accordingly they moved from the desert of Sin, and encamped in Rephidim,+ where they had no water. Here again they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, which they well knew had never hitherto failed them; and forgetting the late miraculous supplies, they reproached Moses for his ill conduct and neglect of them. Moses meekly rebuked them, and cautioned them not to reflect on him, for in so doing they affronted the Lord. But thirst inflaming them, they regarded not his cautions, and grew more mutinous, charging him with a design of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them with thirst.

These complaints and reproaches deeply affected Moses, who immediately addressed himself to God for relief in this distress, expostulating with him thus: 'What shall I do with this people? thirst makes them impatient, and they are ready to stone me.' Considering the many instances of God's providence, notwithstanding their present necessity, the Israelites

God's appointment, and for that use did | had no reason to distrust. However, the Lord had compassion on Moses, and did also pity and bear with the people; 'Give order to the people,' said he, 'to march; and take thy rod, with which thou didst smite the river, and take the elders of the people with thee, and go thou on before; and behold, I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt strike the rock, which shall yield water for the people to drink.t

Mosee did as God commanded, and in memory of the mutiny of the Israelites, he named the place Massah and Meribah. which signify temptation and strife.

But the faith and fortitude of the Is raelites were put to a more severe trial before they could remove from Rephidim: for an army of the Amalekites & was at

It seems as if God had directed the attention of Moses to a particular rock, with which he was well acquainted; for every part of the mount and its vicinity must have been well known to Moses during the time he kept Jethro's flocks in those quarters. Dr Priestley has left the following sensible observations upon this miracle: "The luminous cloud, the symbol of the divine presence, would appear on the rock, and Horeb was probably a part of the same mountain with Sinai. This supply of water, on Moses only striking the rock, where no water had been before nor has been since, was a most wonderful display of the divine power. The water must have been in great abundance to supply two millions of persons, which excluded all possibility of artifice or impos-ture in the case. The miracle must also have been of some continuance no doubt so long as they continued in that neighbourhood, which was more than a year. There are sufficient traces of this extraordinary miracle remaining at this day. This rock has been visited, drawn, and described by Dr Shaw, Dr Pococke, and others; and holes and channels appear in the stone, which could only have been formed by the bursting out and running of the water. No art of man could have done it, if any motive could be supposed for the undertaking in such a place as this." It is a vast block of red granite, fifteen feet long, ten broad, and twelve high .- Dr A. Clarke.

§ These were a people descended from Amalek, the grandson of Esau, see Gen. xxxvi. 12. The ground of their enmity against the Israelites is generally supposed to have been an innate hatred, from the remembrance of Jacob's depriving their progenitor both of his birthright and blessing Their falling upon them however, and that without any provocation, when they saw them reduced to so low a condition by the fatigue of their march, and the excessive drought they laboured under, was an inhuman action, and justly deserved the defeat which Joshua gave them.

^{*} This was the proportion daily allowed to one man, and is computed to contain of English measure three pints and a half, and a fifth part of a

⁺ Moses does not here observe every place where the Israelites encamped, as he doth in Numb. xxxiii. but only those places where some remarkable thing was done.

their heels, and ready to attack them. Moses thereupon ordered Joshua, a valiant young man that always attended him, to draw out a party of choice men against the next morning, and to give the Amalekites battle; and said, 'I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in

my hand.'

Joshua obeyed; and having drawn up his men, Moses in the morning, while the two armies engaged, went up to the top of the hill, taking Aaron and Hur* with him, and holding up the rod of God, as an ensign in his hand, Israel taking courage from thence prevailed; but when, through weariness, he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed: therefore Aaron and Hur, observing that Moses's hands, through a continued waving of the rod, were grown feeble and weary, took a stone, and laid it under him, and standing on each side of him, held up his hands steady till the going down of the sun; in which time Joshua routed the Amalekite army, and put them to the sword.

This success in their first martial enterprise very much encouraged Joshua and the Israelites; and that so remarkable an action might be transmitted to posterity, God commanded it to be recorded in a book, and bid Moses rehearse it to Joshua the general to animate him to future service; for, saith the Lord, 'I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.'

And for a memorial of this victory, Moses built an altar to sacrifice thereon for it, and called it Jehovah-nissi;† because, said he, the Lord hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Israelites soon after came near to the place where God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and not far from his father-in-law Jethro's habitation: Jethro having heard of all that God had done for Moses and his people Israel, and understanding they were now near him, took his daughter Zipporah, Moses's wife, with their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and brought them to him to the Israelitish camp; where, after mutual salutations and embracings, Moses gave Jethro a particular account of the Lord's dealing with Pharaoh and the Egyptians in defence of Israel, and of all that had befallen them during their march thither.

Jethro being a devout man,‡ testified his joy by rendering solemn praise to God, and acknowledging his sovereignty, offering at the same time a burnt-offering and sacrifices of thanksgiving to God, in which Aaron and all the elders of Israel joined with him, and feasted together.

During Jethro's stay in the camp, he observed the great weight of business under which Moses laboured, in hearing the complaints, and determining the differences of so great a people; and, therefore, being a wise and experienced man himself, he advised his son-in-law to substitute certain subordinate officers, properly qualified, men of sincerity and abilities, such as feared God and hated covetousness, to be rulers; some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, who should hear and end all smaller matters among the people, and refer the greater and more weighty causes only to him; assuring him, that if with God's approbation he did follow this advice, it would be better both for the people and himself.

Moses approved of his counsel, and immediately put it in practice, to the great ease of himself and the people. Jethroseeing things thus settled, took his leave-

Moses and Aaron.—Bishop Patrick.

† That is, 'the Lord is my banner,' as he declared by holding up his rod and his hands.

^{*} Josephus says Hur was the husband of Miriam. Certainly he was a person of wisdom and piety, or he would not have been joined with Moses and Aaron.—Bishop Patrick.

[‡] Jethro being sprung from the loins of Abraham by Keturah his second wife, though not of the seed of promise, it is evident that he worshipped the true God, and therefore Moses refused not to marry his daughter.

of his son-in-law, and returned to his own

Three months* after the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, they left Rephidim, and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, before the mount of God.

Here it pleased God to summons his servant Moses, and command him to remind his people Israel of the signal proofs he had given of his gracious regard; and also to assure them, that though they had mistrusted both his truth and power, yet if they would constantly bear in mind the covenant he had established with them, he would manifest farther tokens of his love toward them, and signalize them from all other nations upon earth, as a people more immediately devoted to the service of their God.

Moses having communicated this to the elders and people, they unanimously answered. That whatsoever the Lord had commanded them, they would obediently perform. Moses returned the people's answer to God, who said to Moses, 'I will come to you in the darkness of a cloud, that the people may see something of me, when I shall speak to you, and may always believe you.'

Then he commanded him to direct the people to cleanse themselves, and to wash their garments during two days, and to be ready the third day on which the Lord would descend + in the sight of all the people on mount Sinai; that he should

mark out bounds about the mountain, which none was to pass before the trumpet began to sound.

These were the preparatory solemnities to the Lord's giving the law; § after which followed divers judicial laws intermixed with some ceremonials, and backed with promises of blessings upon the people's obedience.

All this Moses wrote in a book, and then read it to the people; and having, by God's command, brought up Aaron with his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, so near that they saw the divine Majesty, yet they were not smitten by it, but survived the sight.

CHAPTER V.

Moses goes up to the mount with Joshua, and commits the charge of his people to Aaron and Hur.-Receives the tables of stone on which were inscribed the words of the law .-Various ceremonies instituted .- Aaron contributes to the idolatry of the people, who are severely chastised by Moses on his return .-God threatens the people .- Converses famil-

* This was in the beginning of the month

miscuously used by the sacred historian, by reason, from thence called the Decalogue.

of their contiguity; and yet it is certain that they are two different places. Sinai, which the Arabians at this day call Tor, or the mountain, by way of eminence, or otherwise, Gibel Mousa, the mount of Moses, stands in a kind of peninsula, formed by two arms of the Red sea, one of which stretches out towards the north, and is called the gulf of Kolsom; the other towards the east, and is called the gulf of Elan, or the Elanitish sea. Sinai is, at least, one third part higher than Horeb, and of a much more difficult ascent; whose top terminates in an uneven and rugged space, capable of containing about sixty persons. Here is built the little chapel of St Catharine, where it is thought that the body of this saint rested for 330 years, but was afterwards removed to the church, which is at the foot of the mountain. Not far from this chapel issues out a fountain of good fresh water, which is looked upon as miraculous, because it is not conceivable how water can rise from the brow of so high a mountain. Horeb is to the west of Sinai, so that at sun-rising the shadow of Sinai entirely covers Horeb. At the foot of this mount there is a fountain, which supplies water to the monastery of St Catharine; and about five or six paces from it they show us the stone, from whence it is thought that the water came forth which the Israelites did drink .- Calmet.

Mhich contained the ten commandments,

Sivan, containing part of May and June.

† It must be observed here, and likewise in other places of the same nature, that the scripture, suiting itself to man's common way of speaking and thinking, assigns such things to God as are only proper to the effects. It is said that God descended on the mountain, because he made his presence more visible there, by sensible and surprising effects. It may be also said, it was an angel descended from God, who spoke to Moses, and gave the law; but the text expresses, Exod. xix. 20. that it was God himself who descended upon the top of mount Sinai.

† The mountains of Sinai and Horeb are pro-

iarly with Moses, whose face shines with uncommon lustre .- Building of the tabernacle, and settling other holy concerns.

Soon after Moses, at the divine command, ascended the mount, together with Joshua only, directing the elders to tarry for them till they should return, and referring them to Aaron and Hur for assistance and advice in any difficult case that might be brought before them. Moses was no sooner got up to the mountain of God, but a cloud covered the mount, and the glory of the Lord abode upon it like a devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel. The seventh day God called Moses from the midst of the fire, and he entered the midst of the cloud, and went further up the mount, and remained there forty days and as many nights. During which time he received the tables of stone, wherein God himself had written the law: and was instructed by God how the tent or tabernacle should be made, wherein he should be worshipped.

He likewise described the sanctuary, the table for the show-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar for the burnt-offerings, the court of the tabernacle, the bason to wash in, the ark, the candlestick, the priestly vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated, what part of the offering they were to take, and how the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. God likewise pitched upon the very men to undertake the building, Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan.

In fine, he recommended the keeping of the Sabbath, and having ended the discourse,* gave Moses two stone tables, containing the covenant or law, which were written by the hand of God.

Whilst Moses was conversing with God upon the mount, and Joshua dutifully waiting his return, the people in the camp, growing impatient of his long absence,

tumultuously repaired to Aaron; and, as if they despaired of God's protection, because he did not continually work miracles to convince them, they concluded Moses had deserted them; and therefore demanded of Aaron to make them gods to go before them.

Aaron, who should have restrained them from this madness, too easily complied; and for want of reproving and expostulating with them on the unreasonableness of their wild desire, contributed to their idolatry; and, as if he had a mind to forward them in this wicked intention. he bid them break off the golden rings,+ which were in the ears of their wives and children, and bring them to him. When he had received these, he tied them in a bag, and made a molten calf t of them, which they owned for their god, saying, 'This is thy god, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.' Aaron, seeing the people so much delighted with their golden god, as if he were possessed with the same idolatrous spirit, built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast to be holden the next day to the Lord. But it proved rather a feast of revelling and luxury; for after they had made their oblations and peace-offerings, they sat down to eat and drink, and spent the whole day in feasting and pleasure. §

Moses was in the mount conversing

It is supposed that all this merriment of theirs was in imitation of the Egyptians, who, when they had found out their god Apis, (whereof this golden calf was designed for an emblem) were used to bring him, in solemn pomp, to Memphis, the royal city, with children going before in procession, and all the company singing a song of praise to the deity.—Patrick's Commentary.



^{*} See the particulars from the twenty-third to the thirty-second chapter of Exodus.

[†] These probably were the same which they had borrowed of the Egyptians.

† The reason why they worshipped God rather in the similitude of a calf than of any other creature, is generally by expositors conceived to be from the corruptions they had learned among the Egyptians, (who worshipped their idol Apis or Serapis in a living ox, and likewise in an image made in the form and similitude of an ox with a bushel on his head) in memory, as some say, of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's providence, who measured out the corn to the people in that extreme dearth.

with his God, while the wanton Israelites were revelling in the camp, little suspecting so sudden a change in a people who had so late and solemnly entered into a covenant of obedience to all that God should command. But he, from whom no secret can be hid, was instantly apprised of their sudden revolt; therefore telling Moses what crime the people had committed, he expressed his indignation against their rebellion and ingratitude; "Go down,' saith he, 'for thy people " whom thou broughtest out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. I know them to be an obstinate people in many instances; therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my resentments in the destruction of them; and to thee will I transfer the blessings I intended for them, and of thee will I make a great nation.'

But notwithstanding the Israelites' frequent rebellions against God, and tumultuous mutinies against him, Moses was so far from seeking his own interest by their destruction, that he interposed with his prayers; and with his importunate entreaties so appeased the Lord, that he desisted from their destruction.

The pious Moses having deprecated the awful stroke of divine vengeance hastened down from the mount, and took Joshua with him, who had, during his stay above, waited for him below. As they went, Joshua, hearing the noise of the people shouting, observed to Moses, that there was a noise of war in the camp. But Moses, who knew the accursed and idolatrous cause of the same, replied, 'that the noise was not like that of those which shouted for victory, nor of those that cried for quarter, but of such as rejoiced.'

Being come within sight of the camp, Moses spied the calf, and the people dancing before it, which so incensed him, that in a holy rage at their ingratitude

Moses, having given the people these manifest tokens of his resentment of their idolatry, chastised Aaron for being accessary to the abominable crime; which Aaron very poorly excused, by urging the mischievous temper of the people, and that he had complied with them for quiet-sake. Moses did not long reason the case with Aaron; for seeing that the people by Aaron's indiscretion were naked, and stripped of the defence and protection which God's presence and favour had been to them, and that too amongst their enemies; and to make a further atonement for this sin, beside that of burning the calf, he went into the midst of the camp, and calling out, said, 'Let those who are for the Lord join themselves with me.' Upon which all the sons of Levi, who were not concerned in the late idolatry, repaired to him, whom he ordered to arm, and go through the camp, and slay all the ringleaders of the sedition, with their followers: the Levites thus commissioned fell on, and slew about three thousand men. For this laudable zeal, and ready obedience, Moses blessed the family of Levi, + assuring them that by this shedding the blood of their idolatrous brethren without favour or distinction, they had consecrated themselves to the Lord, who would not fail to bless them for it.

and rebellion, he threw the tables, whereon God had with his own hand written
the law, against the rock, and brake them
to pieces. Then taking the idol calf, to
deface it, he first threw it into the fire
and burnt it, and grinding it to powder,
he took the powder, and strewed it upon
the water; and to make them more sensible of their folly in worshipping that as
a god, which should pass through their
bodies, he made the Israelites drink of
the water.

^{*} By this expression it seems as if God had disowned them any more to be his people, and would east them off, had not a mediator interceded in their behalf.

[†] This fact did so please God, that he turned away the curse of Jacob against Levi, to a blessing.

execution of his wrath upon the ungrateful and unbelieving Israelites; yet he assured them he had in reserve for them a very severe punishment, which on fresh provocation he inflicted in a very aggravated manner.

After this, Moses, returning to the Lord, acknowledged Israel's sin, and asked forgiveness for it with that earnestness and concern, that he prayed God to blot him out of his book,* rather than not to pardon them. But this was inconsistent with the divine justice, and therefore God gave him this short answer: 'Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.'

The divine wrath, being in some measure appeased at the intercession of Moses, the Lord commanded him to lead the people to the place he had appointed: but let him know he was not willing to go along with them, because they were a stiff-necked people, lest they should provoke him to consume them in the way;

Though it pleased God to suspend the yet, to show that he had still some tenderness and regard for them, he would send his angel before them, to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land, that so he might perform the oath which he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This was very afflicting news to the Israelites, who now plainly perceived that God's withdrawing his immediate presence from them was the effect of their rebellion; upon which they mourned, and, to show their humiliation, they forbore to put on their ornaments. But Moses, to humble them the more, and make them more sensible of their sin, took a tent, and pitching it without the camp at a good distance, called it the tabernacle of the congregation: intimating to them by this, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their idolatry, that he had removed from them, and would no longer dwell amongst them as he had done before: by which means, every one that sought the Lord was obliged to go to this tabernacle without the camp; and when Moses went to it, as he entered in, the cloudy pillar, in which the Lord used to appear, descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle.

These tokens of the divine wrath rendered the people more careful in observing the motions of Moses; and therefore when he went out of the camp to the tabernacle they rose up, and stood every man at his tent door looking after him, till he was gone in: and when they saw the cloudy pillar, which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all worshipped. Here the Lord talked with Moses, and permitted Moses to talk with him very familiarly; + which favour Moses improved to the people's advantage; labouring with much importunity to reconcile God to them.

After which, the Lord having, at

^{*} This way of speaking is evidently grounded upon the numbering of the children of Israel at their coming out of Egypt, and the registering of their names in a scroll or register, as may be seen Num. i. The same method was likewise taken at the return from the Babylonish captivity, as may be seen in the books of izra and Nehemiah; and those who were enrolled in this book, are said to be written for life, or among the living, for avery year they blotted out of this catalogue the names of those who died. If Moses had desired to be damned, atheists and deists might have reason to say, that he had made a very extravagant demand, which looked more like madness than inspiration. But Dr Stillingfleet, after several others, has proved that he had not the least thought of damnation. No such thing can be found in what goes before or after; and besides, the whole design of this chapter is quite opposite to this sort of thought, and runs all on temporal punishments. And this may be gathered from a like prayer of Moses on another occasion, where he says, 'If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand,' Num. xi. 15. The Hebrew word also, which is rendered to blot out signifies to kill or destroy. It is therefore evident, that 'to be written in the book of life,' signifies to be under the favour and protection of God, and that to be blotted out of it signifies to lose life by a just punishment, as most of the learned do allow.

⁺ Moses talking familiarly with God is accommodated to man's capacity, which is expressed, Exod. xxxiii. 11. to be face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.

Moses's request, and to encourage and comfort him, shown him so much of his glory, as he was capable of seeing, being overcome with this good man's excess of charity, he bid him prepare two new tables of stone,* like the former, which he had broken, and come up himself alone with them in the morning to mount Sinai, and I, said he, will write in those tables the words that were in the first.

Moses accordingly rose up early in the morning, and repaired to mount Sinai with the two tables, where prostrating himself before the divine Majesty, who appeared in the cloud on the top of the mount, most humbly beseeched him to pardon the sin of his people. The Lord favourably received his intercession, and promised to make a covenant with his people, + upon condition they would keep his commandments; that they would not worship the gods of the Canaanites; that they would make no alliances with the people of that country; that they would have no strange gods; that they would keep the sabbath, the passover, and other festivals ordained by the law.

Moses having continued in the mount forty days and forty nights in communion with God without meat and drink, returned to the people with the two tables of the law; but he knew not that with God's talking with him his face had contracted a splendour.‡ Wherefore Aaron and the Israelites being frighted at the lustre of his

countenance, durst not approach him; which Moses perceiving, he put a veil upon his face, and then calling the rulers and all the people to him, he gave them in command all that the Lord had charged him with in the mount: and from that time, so long as the lustre lasted upon his face, when he talked with the people he put on the veil, but when he went in to speak to the Lord he put it off.

Moses now informed the people, that it was the Lord's will to have a tabernacle built: and that he had commanded him to speak to them to bring in their offerings, which were to consist of materials with which it was to be made. The directions now given were the same with those when Moses went first up to the mount; but, by reason of the people's transgression in idolizing the calf, they were not then delivered to them. This offering was not to be exacted, but the people were to give it voluntarily; to which God so inclined them, that they soon brought in more than was requisite, so that Moses was obliged to cause proclamation to be made to restrain their liberality.

Preparations being made, the charge was delivered to Bezaleel and Aholiab, two ingenious men, and well-skilled in architecture and all manner of workmanship, who employed all the men and women that had any skill in curious operations.

This tabernacle was a tent covered with curtains and skins, but much larger than the other tents. It was divided into two parts: the one covered, and properly called the tabernacle; and the other open, called the court. The covered part was again divided into two other parts; the one called the holy of holies, the curtains of which were made of embroidered linen of several colours. There were ten curtains, twenty-eight cubits long, and four in breadth, five curtains together made two coverings, which being made fast together covered all the tabernacle. Over the rest there were two other coverings.

^{*} It is thought by Eusebius that Moses first taught the use of letters to the Jews, and that the Phoenicians learned them from the Jews, and the Grecians from the Phoenicians. The matter upon which men wrote in ruder times was different: some on rinds of trees; some on tiles; some on tables; which last was chiefly in use among the Jews.

[†] God here calls the children of Israel, thy people, that is, Moses's people, for he would not call them his: for this reconciliation of God's was but conditional, and in proportion to their obedience.

[‡] The vulgar Latin renders Moses's face horned; from whence, it is probable, of old he was pictured with horns on his head. But the Septuagint render it much better, glorified, to which the apostle, Cor. iii. 7. alludes.

the one of goats' hair, the other of sheepskins. These veils or coverings were laid on a square frame of planks resting on bases. There were forty-eight large planks, each a cubit and half wide, and ten cubits high, twenty of them on each side, and six at one end to the westward, and one on each corner: each plank was borne on two silver bases; they were let into one another, and held by bars running the length of the planks. The east end was open, and only covered with a curtain. The holy of holies was parted from the rest of the tabernacle by a curtain made fast to four pillars, standing ten cubits from the end. The whole length of the tabernacle was thirty-two cubits high, the upper curtain hung on the north and south-sides eight cubits, and on the east and west four cubits.

The court was a spot of ground an hundred cubits long, and fifty in breadth, inclosed by twenty columns, each of them twenty cubits high, and ten in breadth, covered with silver, and standing on copper bases, five cubits distant from each other, between which there were curtains drawn, and fastened with hooks. At the east-end was an entrance twenty cubits wide, covered with a curtain hanging loose.

The ark was in the sanctuary; it was a square chest made of shittim-wood* two

cubits and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide and deep. It was covered with gold plates, and had a gold cornice which bore the lid. On the sides of it were rings, to put poles through to carry it. The covering was all of gold, and called the propitiatory, or mercy seat. There were two cherubim on it, which covered it with their wings; the tables of the law were in the ark, which was therefore called the ark of the testimony, or of the covenant.

The table was made of cedar covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth and one and a half in height. About the edge of it was an ornament; it stood on four feet, and had wooden bars plated with gold to carry it on. They laid on it the offering or show-bread,† (which was changed every day,) six loaves at each end, with incense over them. It was not lawful for any but the priests to eat of that bread.

The candlestick was of pure gold, had seven branches, three on each side, and one in the middle: each branch had three knobs like apples, and three sockets in the shape of half almond shells; that in the middle had four; on each branch was a gold lamp, and there were gold snuffers and nippers to dress them.

There were two altars, one for the

^{*} Jerome says, 'the-shittim wood grows in the deserts of Arabia; that it is like white thorn in its colour and leaves, but not in its size, for the tree is so large, that it affords very long planks. The wood is hard, tough, smooth, without knots, and extremely beautiful; so that the rich and curious make screws of it for their presses. It does not grow in cultivated places, nor in any other places of the Roman empire, but only in the deserts of Arabia." He also says, that shittim-wood is of admirable beauty, solidity, strength, and smoothness. From this description, it is thought he means the black Acacia, which is found in the deserts of Arabia, and the wood of which is very common about mount Sinai, on the mountains which border on the Red sea, and is so hard and solid as to be almost incorruptible. It is by no means certain, however, that the Acacia is the wood described by the Hebrew shittim. The LXX, unable to indentify it, have rendered the word "incorruptible wood."—Calmet.

⁺ The Hebrews affirm, that the loaves were square, having four sides, and covered with leaves of gold. They were twelve in number, in memory of the twelve tribes of Israel, in whose names they were offered. Every loaf was composed of two as-sarons of flour, which make about five pints 1-10th. The loaves had no leaven; were presented hot every sabbath day, the old loaves being taken away, which were to be eaten by the priests only. With this offering there were salt and incense; and even wine, according to some commentators. Scripture mentions only salt and incense; but it is presumed wine was added, because it was not wanting in other sacrifices and offerings. It is believed that the loaves were placed one upon the other in two piles, of six each; and that between every loaf there were two thin plates of gold, folded back in a semicircle, the whole length of them, to admit air, and to hinder the loaves from growing mouldy. These golden plates, thus turned in, were supported at their extremities by two golden forks which rested upon the ground.

and three in height, with a sort of seraphim at each corner. It was hollow, covered both within and without with brass plate, and open both at top and bottom. In the midst of it was a copper grate, high, and fastened with hooks and rings. On it were burned the wood and the offerings. There were all necessaries for that service, as kettles, ladles, tongs, hooks, and the rest.

The altar of the incense was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high. It was plated with gold, and had a crown of gold over it. The altar was in the sanctuary with the ark; that of the burnt-offering was in the tabernacle on the north-side, on the table opposite to it on the south-side. In the court was a great copper bason on a pillar, with several cocks for water to run out, for washing the hands of those that ministered.

The vestments of the high-priest were the breast-plate, the ephod, the robe, the close coat, the mitre, and the girdle. The ephod, the robe, and the close coat were of linen, and covered the whole body from the neck to the heels. Over all was a purple tunic, a vestment larger and finer wrought, which reached not so low, but at the bottom of it hung pomegranates and bells.* The ephod consisted of two bands

These were the solemn ornaments belonging to the high-priest; the others were only a simple tunic or vestment, a linen mitre, and a girdle. They had all breeches of linen and cotton, covering their legs and thighs, and reaching up to the waist.

The orders being punctually obeyed, the vestments and other apparatus were submitted to the inspection of Moses, who having viewed them, and found that all was done as the Lord had commanded, praised God for the people's diligence, and prayed for them. And now all things

burnt-offerings, five cubits long and wide, made of gold thread, and of several colours, made fast to a sort of collar, which hung down before and behind on both shoulders, and meeting, served for a girdle to the tunic or vestment. On the shoulders were two large precious stones, which standing on four feet, a cubit and a half joined the fore and the hind parts of the ephod, on which were carved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each of them. The breast-plate being of the same workmanship, but double, was made fast with gold chains to the ephod. It was a square ornament, very thick, and covering the breast. The girdle was the ephod itself crossed, or some other band of the same matter. The mitre was of fine flax; it covered the head; and on the forehead was a gold plate, on which were carved these words, the holiness of the

^{*} What the number of the bells, worn by the high-priest, was, the scripture is silent, and authors are not so well agreed, but the sacred historian has let us into the use and intent of them in these words; 'And it shall be upon Aaron to minister : and his sound shall be heard when he goeth into the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.' The kings of Persia are said to have the hem of their robes adorned, like the Jewish high-priest, with pomegranates, and gold bells. The ladies, who were about his person, and whose business it is to please and divert him, have little gold bells fastened to their legs, their neck, and elbows, and when they dance, the sound of these makes a very agreeable harmony. The Arabian princesses wear large hollow gold rings, which are tilled with little flints, and make a sound, like little bells, when they walk; and besides these, they have abundance of little flat bobs fastened to the ends of their hair, which

make a noise, as often as they stir, and give notice that the mistress of the house is going by, that so the servants of the family may behave themselves respectfully, and strangers retire, to avoid seeing the person that is passing. It was, therefore, in all probability, with a design of giving notice, that the high-priest was passing by, that he too wore little bells on the hem of his robe; or rather, it was (as it were) a kind of public notice, that he was going into the sanctuary; for, as in the king of Persia's court, no one was suffered to enter the apartments, without giving notice thereof by the sound of something; so the high-priest, out of respect to the divine presence, residing in the holy of holies, did, by the sound of little bells, fastened to the bottom of his robe, desire, as it were, permission to enter, that the sound of the bells might be heard, and he not punished with death for an unmannerly intrusion .- Calmet.

being ready, on the first day of the first skinned, cut in pieces, and laid on the month, in the second year after their departure from Egypt, the tabernacle was by God's immediate command set up, and all its furniture disposed in the proper places.

This done, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled it; so that for a while Moses himself was not able to enter it.

This cloud was the signal to the people of Israel by which they knew when to march, and when to rest. For when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed; but if the cloud was not taken up, they journeyed not until it was.

CHAPTER VI.

Institution of the sacrifice, and various other ceremonies .- Appointment of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office .- First burnt-offering .- Terrible judgment inflicted on Nadab and Abihu. Shelomith's sons stoned for blasphemy .- The Israelites are mustered and encamped .- The manner of their dislodgment .-Quails sent for food to the Israelites.

THE tabernacle being set up, and all things prepared, God proceeded to give direction to Moses, and by him to the people, in what manner his public worship, under that dispensation, should be performed, which was by sacrifice; and i this was an offering made to God, to acknowledge his sovereignty over his creatures, and to expiate sin.

Only five sorts of creatures were appointed to be offered in sacrifice, which were oxen, lambs, goats, turtles, and young doves, all which were to be males, without blemish.

He who presented an offering did it at the altar, and laid his two hands on the head of the creature, and then the throat of it was cut within the first tabernacle. The blood was received in a bason, and with it the priest sprinkled the vessels and corners of the altar; the rest was spilled at the foot of the altar. The victim was

altar, where either the whole or some part of it was burnt, according to the several sorts of sacrifices.

Libations likewise were added to the sacrifices. All the wine, or flour, which were offered with the victim, were called effusion, or pouring out.

There was a separate offering of fine flour and oil, baked on an iron, or in a pan. These were sprinkled with oil and frankincense added to them.

The sacrifices were of four sorts:

- 1. The burnt-offering, every part of which was consumed by fire on the altar, after washing the feet and entrails.
- 2. The peace-offering, of which only the inward fat or tallow was burnt on the altar, made up with the liver and kidneys, and the tails of the lambs. The breast and the right shoulder belonged to the priests, who were obliged to eat them in the holy place; the rest belonged to him who offered the sacrifice.
- 3. The sacrifice for sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly: and in this the priest took some of the blood of the victim, dipped his finger in it, and sprinkled seven times towards the vail of the sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice: the rest, if the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the high-priest, or for the people, was carried without the camp to be burnt there, with the skin, the head, the feet, and the bowels. If it was for a private person, the victim was divided, as was said above, between the priest and the offerer.
- 4. The sacrifice of oblation was either fine flour, or incense, or cakes of fine flour and oil baked, or the first-fruits of new corn. With the things offered there were always oil, salt, wine, and frankincense.* All the frankincense was cast

^{*} Frankincense is an aromatic and odoriferous gum which issues out of a tree named by the ancients Thurifera; -its leaves resemble those of a pear-tree, according to Theophrastus. Incisions

offered, the priest took one part, which he also burnt, and the rest belonged to him.

The next principal object of the Jewish worship was their festivals. The first of which was their sabbath, which they kept very strictly, dedicating it wholly to rest, not doing the least servile work on that

It began like all other festivals, on one evening, and ended the next. The passover+ was likewise a very solemn festival.

are made in it, in the dog-days, to procure the gum. Male incense is the best; it is round, white, fat, and kindles on being put to the fire. It is also called Olibanum. Female incense is soft, more gummy, and less agreeable in smell than the other. That of Saba was the best, and most esteemed by the ancients, who speak of it with great

approbation.

* The Rabbins reckon thirty-nine primary prohibitions, which ought to be observed on the sabbath, and several other secondary ones dependent on them. Their number is, in fact, so great, that it is almost impossible to keep them all; and the Rabbins affirm, that if the people of Israel could keep but two sabbaths as they ought to be kept, they should soon see themselves delivered from the evils under which they groan. Their scrupulosity even forbids to peel, or to roast, an apple; to kill a flea, a fly, or other insect, if it is so big that the sex may be distinguished; to sing, or to play on an instrument, so loud as to awaken a child. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the Samari-tans pretend, that the Jews are not religious enough in their observation of the sabbath. As for them, they will not light a fire on this day, they abstain from the use of marriage, they do not stir from their places, save only to go to the house of the Lord: they employ themselves wholly in reading the law, in prayers and thanksgivings. Of all the festivals God has enjoined, there are none of which the Jews are so jealous, or of which they speak so magnificently, as of the sabbath. They call it their spouse, because God has given it to them, specially, exclusive of all other nations. Leo of Modena, who alone is equivalent to all the modern Jews, says, the Rabbins have reduced all that is forbidden on the sabbath-day, to thirty-nine heads, each of which have their circumstances, and dependences. But they are of little importance, and their enumeration would occupy much space. -Calmet.

+ Dr Lightfoot has collected from the Talmud a variety of passages relative to the Jewish mode of celebrating the passover; from which we have abridged the following particulars. The guests being placed around the table, they mingled a cup of wine with water, over which the master of the family (or, if two or more families were united, a person deputed for the purpose) gave thanks, and then drank it off. The thanksgiving for the wine was to this effect, 'Blessed be thou, O Lord, who

into the fire; but of the other things It began the evening of the fourteenth day of the March moon. They ate none but unleavened bread for seven days, and the seventh day was another great festival. The first day after the passover they offered new ears of corn, and from that day they reckoned seven full weeks, or fifty days, and that fiftieth day was another solemn festival, called the harvest festival; and they offered in thanksgiving, two loaves of new wheat, as the first fruits of the harvest.

> The first day of the seventh month which was the first of the civil year,

hast created the fruit of the vine;' and for the day, as follows-' Blessed be thou for this good day, as tonows— bressed by thou for this good day, and for this holy convocation, which thou hast given us for joy and rejoicing! Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified Israel and the times! Of these cups of wine they drank four in the course of the ordinance. They then washed their hands, after which the table was furnished with the paschal lamb, roasted whole, with bitter herbs, and with two cakes of unleavened bread, together with the remains of the peace-offerings sacrificed on the preceding day, and the charoseth, or thick sauce. The officiator, or person presiding, then took a small piece of salad, and having blessed God for creating the fruit of the ground, he ate it, as also did the other guests: after which all the dishes were removed from the table, that the children might inquire and be instructed in the nature of the feast. The text on which they generally discoursed was Deut. xxvi. 5—11. Then replacing the supper, they explained the import of the bitter herbs and passed the learner the feast. chal lamb; and over the second cup of wine repeated the hundred and thirteenth and hundred and fourteenth psalms, with an eucharistic prayer. The hands were again washed, accompanied by an ejaculatory prayer; after which the master of the house proceeded to break and bless a cake of the unleavened bread, which he distributed among the guests, reserving half of the cake beneath a napkin, if necessary, for the aphicomen, or last morsel; for the rule was, to conclude with eating a small piece of the paschal lamb, or, after the destruction of the temple, of unleavened bread. They then ate the rest of the cake with the bitter herbs, dipping the bread into the charoseth, or sauce. Next they ate the flesh of the peace-offerings which had been sacrificed on the fourteenth day, and then the flesh of the paschal lamb, which was followed by returning thanks to God, and a second washing of hands. A third cup of wine was then filled, over which they blessed God, or said grace after meat (whence it was called the cup of blessing), and drank it off. Lastly, a fourth cup of wine was filled, called the cup of the hallel: over it they completed, either by singing or recitation, the great hallel, or hymn of praise, consisting of psalms exv. to exviii. inclusive, with a prayer, and so concluded.-Horne.

festival. On the tenth of the same month was kept the feast of expiation, and that was the day on which the priests went into the sanctuary. They offered two goats, one of which was a solemn sacrifice for sin. The high-priest took the blood of this, and of the lamb killed in the sanctuary, and sprinkled them; the other goat was carried not only out of the tabernacle, but without the camp also, and was therefore called Azazel, or the scape-goat.

On the fifteenth of the same month began the feast of tabernacles,* and lasted

* The design of this feast was, to return thanks to God for the fruits of the vine, as well as of other trees, which were gathered about this time, and also to implore his blessing upon those of the ensuing year. The following were the principal ceremonies observed in the celebration of this feast. During the whole of this solemnity they were obliged to dwell in tents, which anciently were pitched on the flat terrace-like roofs of their houses. Besides the ordinary daily sacrifices, there were several extraordinary ones offered on this occasion, which are detailed in Numb. xxix. During the continuance of this feast, they carried in their hands branches of palm-trees, olives, citrons, myrtles, and willows; singing 'Hosanna, save, I beseech thee,' in which words they prayed for the coming of the Messiah. These branches also bore the name of Hosanna, as well as all the days of the feast. During its continuance, they walked in procession round the altar with the above mentioned branches in their hands, amid the sound of trumpets, singing Hosanna; and on the last or seventh day of the feast, they compassed the altar seven times. This was called the great Hosanna. One of the most remarkable ceremonies performed at this feast in the later period of the Jewish polity, was the libation or pouring out of water, drawn from the fountain or pool of Siloam, upon the altar. On the last day, the Jews fetched water from that fountain in a golden pitcher, which they brought through the water-gate into the temple, with great rejoicing. The officiating priest poured it, mixed with wine, upon the morning sacri-fice, as it lay on the altar. The Jews seem to have adopted this custom (for it is not ordained in the law of Moses) as an emblem of future blessings, in allusion to this passage in Isaiah, 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation: expressions that can hardly be understood of any benefits afforded by the Mosaic dispensa-Water was offered to God this day, partly in reference to the water which flowed from the rock in the wilderness, but chiefly to solicit the blessing of rain on the approaching seed-time. No festival was celebrated with greater rejoicings than this, which Josephus calls "a most holy and most eminent feast." Dancing, music, and feast-

published by sound of trumpet, was also a | eight days, being kept as a memorial that the children of Israel had lived in tents. During this feast they lived in huts covered with boughs of trees, and spent those days in mirth, holding boughs in their hands, with which they went round the

> Every seventh year was dedicated to rest; for in them they neither sowed nor reaped: but the fiftieth year, called Jubilee,+ was most solemn; for then all estates

> ing were the accompaniments of this festival, together with such brilliant illuminations as lighted the whole city of Jerusalem. These rejoicings are supposed to have taken place in the court of the women, in order that they might be partakers of the general hilarity. In every seventh year the law of Moses was also read in public, in the pre-

> sence of all the people.—Horne.
>
> † The jubilee year began on the first day of Tizri, (the first month of the civil year,) and about the autumnal equinox. During the year no one either sowed or reaped; but all were satisfied

> with what the earth and the trees produced spontaneously. Each resumed possession of his invheritance, whether it were sold, mortgaged, or alienated; and Hebrew slaves of every description were set free, with their wives and children, Lev. xxv. The first nine days were spent in festivity, during which no one worked, and every one put a crown on his head. On the tenth day, which was the day of solemn expiation, the Sanhedrim ordered the trumpets to sound, and instantly the slaves were declared free, and the lands returned to their hereditary owners. This law was mercifully designed to prevent the rich from oppressing the poor, and reducing them to perpetual slavery; and also to prevent their getting possession of all the lands by purchase, mortgage, or usurpation; that debts should not be multiplied too much; and that slaves should not continue, with their wives and children, in perpetual bondage. Be-sides, Moses intended to preserve, as much as possible, the liberty of persons, a due proportion of fortunes, and the order of families; as well as that the people should be bound to their country, their lands, and inheritances; and that they should cherish an affection for them, as estates descended from their ancestors, and designed for their pos-terity. There were several privileges belonging to the jubilee year, which did not belong to the sabbatical year; though the latter had some advantage above the former. The sabbatical year annulled debts, which the jubilee did not; but the jubilee restored slaves to their liberty, and lands to their owners; besides which, it made restitu-tion of the land immediately on the beginning of the jubilee; whereas, in the sabbatical year, debts were not discharged till its close. Houses and other edifices built in walled towns did not return to the proprietor in the jubilee year. After the captivity of Babylon, the Jews continued to

them, and slaves recovered their liberty.

The Israelites in their eating distinguished between clean and unclean creatures: it was lawful for them to eat of the first, but not of the last.

There were two qualifications required for the reckoning of a beast clean; which were, that it should have a cloven hoof, and that it should chew the cud; so that it was unlawful for them to eat swine's flesh, because they do not chew the cud; or rabbits and hares, because they have not cloven feet, like the ox, the stag, the sheep, but toes joined by skins. Among fishes they were allowed to eat such as had fins and scales. All birds of prey were forbid them; and it was unlawful for them to eat blood, or the flesh of beasts strangled.

Of uncleanness there were many sorts among the Israelites; not only they who eat of unclean beasts were reckoned unclean, but also those who touched their carcasses. Leprosy* was reckoned the

observe the sabbatical, but not the jubilee, year. Alexander the Great granted the Jews an exemption from tribute every seventh year, by reason of the rest which they then observed. But, as the jubilee was instituted only to prevent the utter destruction of the partition made by Joshua, and the confusion of tribes and families, it was no longer practicable as before the dispersion of the tribes; those which returned from the captivity settling as they could, and where they could, while a great number of families, and perhaps whole tribes, continued in the place of their captivity. Usher places the first Jubilee after the promulgation of the law by Moses, A. M. 2609; the second, A. M. 2658; the third, A. M. 2707.—Calmet.

* This disease affects the skin, and sometimes increases in such a manner as to produce scurf, scabs, and violent itchings, and to corrupt the whole mass of blood. At other times it is only a deformity. The Jews regarded the leprosy as a disease sent from God, and Moses prescribes no natural remedy for the cure of it. Those who have treated of this disease, have distinguished a recent leprosy from one already formed and become inveterate. A recent leprosy may be healed, but an inveterate one is incurable. Travellers who have seen lepers in the East say, that the disease attacks principally the feet. Maundrell, who had seen lepers in Palestine, says, that their feet are swelled like those of elephants, or horses' feet swelled with the farcy. The common marks by which, as physicians tell us, an inveterate leprosy

alienated returned to those who had sold greatest uncleanness; of the nature and quality of which the priest was to judge, and to separate the lepers from the rest of the people as he thought fit.

> There was also a leprosy which clung to clothes and walls, and the garments; after which the moveables and the houses became unclean. The women were unclean after lying-in, for forty days if they had a son, and sixty days if it were a daughter. Of these uncleannesses some sorts were cleansed by washing their garments and bodies; and others, as the last, by offering sacrifice to cleanse them.

may be discerned are these: the voice becomes hoarse, like that of a dog which has been long barking, and comes through the nose rather than the mouth: the pulse is small and heavy, slow and disordered: the blood abounds with white and bright corpuscles, like millet-seeds; is, in fact, all a scurfy serum, without due mixture; so that salt put into does not melt, and is so dry that vinegar mixed with it bubbles up; the face is like a coal half extinguished, shining, unctuous, bloated, full of very hard pimples, with small kernels round about the bottom of them: the eyes are red and inflamed, and project out of the head, but cannot be moved either to the right or left: the ears are swelled and red, corroded with ulcers about the root of them, and encompassed with small kernels; the nose sinks, because the cartilage rots: the nostrils are open, and the passages stopped with ulcers at the bottom: the tongue is dry, black, swelled, ulcerated, shortened, divided in ridges, and beset with little white pimples; the skin of it is uneven, hard, and insensible; even if a hole be made in it, or it be cut, a putrefied sanies issues from it instead of blood. Leprosy is very easily communicated; and hence Moses has taken so much precaution to prevent lepers from communication with persons in health. His care extended even to dead bodies thus infected, which he directed should not be buried with others. We can hardly fail of observing the character, and terror in consequence, of this disease; how dreadful is the leprosy in scripture! how justly dreadful, when so fatal, and so hopeless of cure! Mungo Park states that the Negroes are subject to a leprosy of the very worst kind; and Mr Grey Jackson, in his 'Account of Morocco,' (p. 192.) informs us, that the species of leprosy called jeddem, is very prevalent in Barbary. "At Morocco there is a separate quarter, outside of the walls, inhabited by lepers only. Those who are affected with it are obliged to wear a badge of distinction whenever they leave their habitations, so that a straw hat, with a very wide brim, tied on in a particular manner, is the signal for persons not to approach the wearer. Lepers are seen in many parts of Barbary, sitting on the ground, with a wooden bowl before them, begging. They intermarry with each other"-Calmet.

The laws relating to matrimony were But besides the moral precepts contained these. The Israelites were forbid to marry strange women. One man might have several wives; but the persons among them, with whom it was not allowed to contract matrimony, were the father, the mother, the mother-in-law, the sister by the father or mother's side, the son's or daughter's daughter, the father's wife's daughter, the father or mother's sister, the uncle, the daughter-in-law, the brother's wife, the wife's sister and daughter, or grandson or grand-daughter.

However, it was not only lawful, but a command, that the brother should marry the brother's widow, if he died without issue. Adultery and other sins of impurity were severally forbidden by the law. In short, there was a ceremony to try whether women were guilty of adultery. *

in the decalogue, and more particularly explained in the books of Moses, that holy legislator by God's direction gave them laws for the government of their commonwealth, which were agreeable to reason and equity. It is worthy of observation, that the general laws and customs of the

come near thee, and thou art not polluted by forsaking the bed of thy husband, these bitter waters which I have cursed will not hurt thee; but if thou have gone astray from thy husband, and have polluted thyself by coming near to another man, may thou be accursed of the Lord, and become an example for all his people; may thy thigh rot, and thy belly swell till it burst! may these cursed waters enter into thy belly, and, being swelled therewith, may thy thigh putrefy!' After this the priest took a new pitcher, filled it with water out of the brazen bason that was near the altar of burnt-offering, cast some dust into it taken from the pavement of the temple, mingled something bitter, as wormwood, with it, and having read the curses above mentioned to the woman, and received her answer of Amen, he scraped off the curses from the vellum into the pitcher of water. During this time another priest tore her clothes as low as her bosom, made her head bare, untied the tresses of her hair, fastened her torn clothes with a girdle below her breasts, and presented her with the tenth part of an ephah, or about three pints of barley-meal, which was in a frying-pan, without oil or incense. The other priest, who had prepared the waters of jealousy, then gave them to be drank by the accused person, and as soon as she had swallowed them he put the pan with the meal in it into her hand. This was waved before the Lord, and a part of it thrown into the fire of the altar the woman was innocent, she returned with her husband; and the waters, instead of incommoding her, made her more healthy and fruitful than ever if on the contrary she were guilty, she was seen immediately to grow pale, her eyes started out of her head, and, lest the temple should be defiled with her death, she was carried out, and died instantly with all the ignominious circumstances related in the curses, which the Rabbins say had the same effect on him with whom she had been criminal, though he were absent and at a distance. They add, however, that if the husband himself had been guilty with another woman, then the waters had no bad effect even on his criminal wife; as in that case the transgression on the one part was in a certain sense balanced by the transgression on the other. There is no instance in the scriptures of this kind of ordeal having ever been resorted to; and probably it never was during the purer times of the Hebrew republic. God had rendered himself so terrible by his judgments, that no person would dare to appeal to this mode of trial who was conscious of her guilt; and in case of simple adultery, where the matter was either detected or confessed, the parties were ordered to be put to death .- Clarke.

^{*} The trial by what was afterwards called ordeal is certainly of very remote antiquity, and was evidently of divine appointment. In this place we have an institution relative to a mode of trial precisely of that kind which among our ancestors was called ordeal; and from this all similar trials in Asia, Africa, and Europe have very probably derived their origin. The Rabbins who have commented on this ordeal give us the following information: when any man, prompted by the spirit of jealousy, suspected his wife to have committed adultery, he brought her first before the judges, and accused her of the crime; but as she asserted her innocency, and refused to acknowledge herself guilty, and as he had no witnesses to produce, he required that she should be sentenced to drink the waters of bitterness which the law had appointed; that God, by this means, might discover what she wished to conceal. After the judges had heard the accusation and the denial, the man and his wife were both sent to Jerusalem, to appear before the Sanhedrim, who were the sole judges in such matters. The Rabbins say that the judges of the Sanhedrim, at first, endeavoured with threatenings to confound the woman, and cause her to confess her crime; when she still persisted in her innocence, she was led to the eastern gate of the court of Israel, where she was stripped of the clothes she wore, and dressed in black, before a number of persons of her own sex. The priest then told her, that if she knew herself to be innocent she had no evil to apprehend; but if she were guilty, she might expect to suffer all that the law threatened; to which she answered, Amen, amen. The priest then wrote the words of the law upon a piece of vellum, with ink that had no vitriol in it, that it might be the more easily blotted out. The words written on the vellum were, according to the Rab-bins, the following: 'If a strange man have not

Israelites tended to promote their good both in a social and individual sense; and that the most enormous crimes were punished in a most extraordinary manner.

After some of these directions for the worship of God, Moses, by the express command of God, appointed Aaron high-priest, and his sons, and their offspring, to be the priestly race. When they were sanctified, Moses robed them, anointed their heads with oil, and made them offer sacrifice for sin. The function of the priests in general was to offer sacrifice to the Lord, only the high-priest's was peculiar; for he was allowed to go once a year into the sanctuary on the day of expiation,*

* This was one of the principal solemnities of the Jews, and the ceremonies to be observed hereon were such as these. The high-priest, after he had washed not only his hands and feet, as usual in common sacrifices, but his body likewise, dressed himself in a plain linen garment like one of the priests, and had neither his purple rod, his ephod, nor his pectoral on, because he was going to expiate his own, as well as the people's sins. He first of all offered a bullock and a ram for his own sins, and those of the other priests, putting his hand upon their heads, and confessing his own sins and the sins of his house; then he received from the princes of the people two goats for a sinoffering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, to be offered in the name of all the people. By lots it was determined which of the two goats should be sacrificed, and which set at liberty; and therefore, after that he had perfumed the sanctuary with some burning incense, he took of the blood of the bullock which he had sacrificed, and, dipping his finger in it, sprinkled it seven times between the ark and the vail, which separated between the holy of holies and the body of the tabernacle, or temple. After this he came out again, and, having sacrificed the goat upon which the lot was fallen, he returned with some of its blood into the sanctuary, and there sprinkled it as he had done before: then coming out again, he sprinkled both sides of the court with the blood of the goat, and so proceeding to the altar of burnt-offerings, he wet the four horns of it with the blood of the goat and the bullock, and sprinkled it seven times with the same. After all these ceremonies were finished, the goat that was to be set at liberty, (which was commonly called the scape-goat,) was brought to the high-priest, who put both his hands upon its head, and having confessed all his own sins and the sins of the people, delivered it to persons appointed to that office, who carried it into the wilderness, and left it upon the brink of a precipice at twelve miles distance from Jerusalem. After all which, the high-priest washed himself all over again in the tabernacle, or temple, and putting on his pontifical dress, sacrificed two rams for a burnt-

cense there before the ark, and sprinkle the blood of the offering seven times with his finger. To the priests were joined all the tribe of Levi, to serve in the tabernacle; to both which were appointed particular allowances for their subsistence. But if any of the priestly race or of the tribe of Levi, had any bodily imperfections, they were excluded from the function, but still enjoyed the right and privi leges of their birth. The obligations they lay under were these: they were to drink no wine or intoxicating liquors when they were to officiate in the tabernacle; they were not to marry a woman that was divorced, or had been prostituted; they were not to be at funerals, unless they were of their own fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, and maiden sisters. But now let us return to the historical account.

Eight days after the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Aaron offered his first burnt-offering for himself and the people. This was so acceptable to God, that he gave a miraculous testimony of his approving it by sending fire upon the altar which consumed the offering in the sight of the people, who in loud shouts and acclamations expressed their joy of God's so signally owning their offering,

offering, one for himself, and the other for the people; and so concluded the day with reading the law, and giving the blessing to the people, who all, upon this occasion, behaved with great devotion, fasted punctually, and returned home with a full persuasion and assurance that their sins were entirely done away, and expiated. The modern Jews, who have no sacrifices, content themselves with reading in Leviticus what relates to the solemn service of this day, and the ceremonies concerning the scape-goat. They in like manner fast very strictly, and pray very devoutly, until the conclu sion of the day, when, having received the Rabbin's blessing, they go home, fully satisfied that all their iniquities are pardoned: for their standing maxim is, that repentance, though accompanied with a resolution of living well, does but suspend sins; whereas the feast of expiation does absolutely abolish them. The reader that is desirous to know more of this subject, may consult Basnage's History of the Jews, and Calmet's Dictionary, under the word Expiation.

and in reverence they prostrated themselves on the ground. an insult was severely punished by a righteous and tremendous God, for a suf-

The fire thus miraculously kindled, ought to have been kept continually burning; for so the Lord had expressly commanded.* But Nadab and Abihu, two unhappy sons of Aaron, forgetful of their duty, took their censers, and putting common fire in them, laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord. So flagrant

* See Lev. vi. 12, 13. This fire which, Lev. ix. 24. is said to come from heaven, and to have consumed the first burnt-offering, lasted till the captivity of Babylon. It can admit of little doubt that the perpetual sacred fires of the heathens, whether Persians, Greeks, Romans, Indians, &c. were copied from this divine original amongst the Jews. The antiquity of sacred fires among the Greeks and Romans is well known. Theophrastus informs us that this rite of burning perpetual fire to the gods had formed a part of their worship from time immemorial, being used as an expressive symbol or figure of their immortality. The sacred fire among the Persians was viewed with such superstitious regard, that, if ever it were extinguished, they would only rekindle it by fire lighted up from the sun.—Biblioth, Bibl.

up from the sun.—Biblioth. Bibl.

† There were two sorts of fire used in the tabernacle; the holy fire which came from heaven, and which God had commanded to be kept always burning for the use of the altar of burnt-offering; and the common or profane fire, which was used to boil the flesh of the peace-offering, and sacrifice for sin. Common fire, they thought, might serve the purpose of burning incense, as well as that which was held more sacred: at least, in the gaiety, or rather naughtiness of their hearts, they were minded to make the experiment, even in opposition to the divine command; and therefore it was just and requisite in God, especially in the beginning of the priesthood, and when one alteration of a divine precept might, in process of time, be productive of many more, to inflict an exemplary punishment, that others might hear, and fear, and not commit the like abomina-

‡ Whether these sons of Aaron had too far indulged themselves in the use of wine or other strong liquors which might have made them forgetful of their duty, doth not plainly appear from the text, Lev. x. l. Yet some Jewish doctors affirm it; and from the context, ver. 9. there is some reason to suspect it, because, as soon as they were carried out, God charged Aaron and his sons, on pain of death, 'Not to drink wine or strong drink,' when they were to go into the tabernacle of the congregation; telling them, 'It shall be a statute to them throughout all generations.' And he assigns there the reasons of this so strict prohibition. 'That ye may put a difference between the holy and unholy, between the clean and unclean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken to them by Moses.'

an insult was severely punished by a righteous and tremendous God, for a suffocating flame darted through their insides, and stifled them, without destroying their bodies or garments.

In order to excite in the rest of the priestly order an awe of the divine majesty, and deter them from disobedience to the command of heaven, Moses ordered them to bring the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu from before the sanctuary, and carry them out of the camp in the same. condition they found them. He likewise charged Aaron and his sons not to mourn for Nadab and Abihu, in shaving their heads, or rending their clothes; but that they should leave those marks of mourning to the rest of the people, from whom they ought to distinguish themselves in this, as well as in other points, in reverence to that holy anointing, whereby they had been consecrated to the Lord, and separated from the rest of their brethren. A good instruction and warning to others to beware of murmuring or extreme sorrowing, when the hand of God should visit in judgment.

The next historical matter is another awful proof of the danger of incurring the displeasure of the Almighty, exemplified in the case of one whose mother's name was Shelomith, an Israelitish woman of the tribe of Dan; but his father was an Egyptian, and supposed to be a proselyte to Israel.

This young man going out of his tent, quarrelled with a man of Israel, and fighting, the son of Shelomith was worsted. Being enraged at this disgrace, and retaining, as may be supposed, too much of his father's principles, he fell a cursing and blaspheming the name of the Lord. For this he was immediately apprehended, and brought before Moses, who committed him to custody till the mind of the Lord should be known concerning him; for though the third command in the decalogue forbids the taking of God's name in vain, yet this blasphemous cursing, being

an offence of a higher nature, against which no positive law was yet provided, Moses had recourse to the Lord for counsel and direction therein; who determined thus: 'Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head,* and let all the congregation stone him.'

Moses, in obedience to the divine command, ordered the sentence to be put in execution accordingly; and a law was thereupon made, that whosoever should, from that time, blaspheme the name of the Lord, whether he were an Israelite or a stranger, he should be stoned to death.

During the time of the Israelites' encampment in the wilderness of Sinai, the Lord appointed Moses to take Aaron, and with him a principal man of every tribe, whom the Lord pitched upon by name, and make a general muster of the men fit to bear arms. Moses therefore with Aaron and their assistants, having taken an exact account by poll, of all the males from twenty years old and upwards, that were able to go forth to war in Israel, found the number to be six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men, besides the Levites.†

* This way of laying hands on the heads of criminals may seem to arise from several causes, 1. That they were witnesses of the fact, and that the person condemned suffered justly; protesting, that if he were innocent they desired his blood might fall on their own heads. 2. They put their hands on the head of the criminal in token of an expiatory sacrifice; for idolatry, blasphemy, and such grievous crimes, if they were not punished, they expected would attract a guilt, not only on the witness, but the whole nation, which by the death of the criminal, as by a victim, might be expiated. 3. That the criminal was the just cause of his own death.

† By this we may see how much this people were increased in number in about a year's time, and notwithstanding they had been in a travelling condition, and engaged in battle with the Amalekites, had lost about three thousand men upon the account of their calf. For they were computed to be but about six hundred thousand men, including the tribe of Levi with them, when they came out of Egypt. And now they were 603,550 men, besides the tribe of Levi, which being numbered by itself yielded 22,000 males of a month old and upwards.

God had expressly exempted the tribe of Levi out of this muster, because he had designed them to the peculiar service of the tabernacle; not only to take charge thereof, and of all the vessels belonging to it, but to take it down upon every remove, and carry both the tabernacle and the vessels, and set it up when they pitched again.

Being thus mustered, Moses and Aaron, by the express command of God, ordered the encampment of this great body of people in this manner; they were disposed into four battalions, each under one general standard, which were so placed that they inclosed the tabernacle.

The standard of the camp of Judah was first, which consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, the sons of Leah, pitched over against the tabernacle on the east side of it, towards the rising of the sun.

On the south-side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, the sons of Leah likewise, and of Gad the son of Zilpah her maid.

On the west-side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh,‡ and Benjamin.

And on the north-side was the standard of the camp of Dan, under which were the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, and of Asher the son of Zilpah.

Between § the four great camps | and

‡ Ephraim and Manasseh supplied the place of Joseph their father; and therefore they are taken to be Rachel's children, and so they and Benjamin make the third standard.

|| The later Jews allege, that Judah carried in his standard the figure of a lion, and Reuben the

[§] Josephus tells us, that between each tribe in every one of these four quarters there were distant spaces, like streets, where they bought and sold as in a market, and tradesmen in their shops, in manner of a city leading to and fro. This camp is thought to be round, a mile distant from the tabernacle, that is, a Sabbath day's journey, where the distance between the people and the ark is commanded to be two thousand cubits.

the tabernacle were pitched four less | Aaron, with Aaron's sons, who had the camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, near to the tabernacle, in and about which their service lay.

On the east-side encamped Moses and

figure of a man; Ephraim of an ox, and Dan of an eagle; but these are merely the conjectures of a heated imagination, and are entitled to no serious attention. It is more probable, that the name of each tribe was embroidered on the standard under which they marched; or perhaps they were dis-tinguished, as in some other countries, only by their colours. Mr Harmer is inclined to a differ-ent opinion; he thinks the standards of the tribes were not flags, but little iron machines carried on the top of a pole, in which fires were lighted to direct their march by night, and so contrived, as sufficiently to distinguish them from one another, This is the kind of standard by which the Turkish caravans direct their march through the desert to Mecca, and seems to be very commonly used by travellers in the East. Dr Pococke tells us, that the caravan with which he visited the river Jordan, set out from thence in the evening soon after it was dark for Jerusalem, being lighted by chips of deal full of turpentine, burning in a round iron frame, fixed to the end of a pole, and arrived at the city a little before day break. But he states also, that a short time before this, the pilgrims were called before the governor of the caravan, by means of a white standard that was displayed on an eminence near the camp, in order to enable him to ascertain his fees. In the Mecca caravans, they use nothing by day, but the same moveable beacons in which they burn those fires, which distinguish the different tribes in the night. From these circumstances, Harmer concludes, that, "since travelling in the night must in general be most desirable to a great multitude in that desert, and since we may believe that a compassionate God for the most part directed Israel to move in the night, the standards of the twelve tribes were moveable beacons, like those of the Mecca pilgrims, rather than flags or any thing of that kind." On this reasoning, the following remarks are offered: 1. The people of Israel and the Mecca pilgrims, were in very different circumstances; the former did not need such fire beacons, because they enjoyed the light and direction of a pillar of fire, which, for any thing we know to the contrary, was quite sufficient to enlighten and guide the step of every one in the camp. 2. Flags were actually carried in the caravan to Mecca, beside the fire beacons; for a white standard was raised on an eminence, to summon the pilgrims into the governor's presence. We may therefore suppose, that the many thousands of Israel might have their flags in the desert, to guide the motions of the tribes: and this conjecture receives some countenance from the fact. that such ensigns have been used in the East from the remotest ages. 3. The chosen people were not under the same necessity of travelling in the night, because they were defended from the intense heat of the sun by the pillar of cloud, which was expanded like an immense curtain over their host, all the day .- Paxton.

charge of the sanctuary.

On the south-side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites descended from Kohath the second son of Levi.

On the west-side, behind the tabernacle, stood the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son.

And on the north-side were planted the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who sprung from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

This was the order of their encamping. The manner of their dislodging and marching was thus: when they were to remove (which was when the cloud was taken off the tabernacle,) the trumpet was sounded, and upon the first alarm the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it set forward. Then the tabernacle being taken down, the Gershonites and the Merarites attended the waggons, with the boards and staves of it. When these were on their march, a second alarm was sounded; upon which the standard of Reuben's camp advanced, with the tribes under it.

After them followed the Kohathites, bearing the sanctuary, which being more holy, and less cumbersome than the heavy boards and pillars of the tabernacle, was not put into a waggon, but carried on their shoulders.

Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the three tribes belonging to it. And last of all, the other three tribes under the standard of Dan brought up the

* Having remained a considerable time

^{*} Designing in the text to keep chiefly to the historical part of the sacred writ, and to preserve the connection of matter of fact, with which the preceptive would interfere, I thought it more useful for the reader to continue the series of the story in the text, and put the intervening precepts, and orders here in the notes. In the third and fourth chapters of Numbers, therefore, we have the Lord's taking the Levites to himself in exchange for the first-born, with the reason for his so doing; likewise his giving the Levites to the

before the mount of the Lord, the Israel- | place called Taberah, which signifies burnites decamped by God's command on the first day of the second month, the second year after their coming out of Egypt. In their march the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting place for them: at the setting forward of which Moses said, 'Rise, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.' And when the ark rested again, he added, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.' Having marched three days into the wilderness, they came to a place called, 'The graves of lust,' from what happened to the Israelites there. Murmuring against the Lord, and complaining of the weariness of their journey, he was so incensed against them, that he sent down fire, and destroyed those that were in the extreme parts of the camp.* Frighted at this judgment, they repaired to Moses, upon whose intercession the fire was quenched, and the name of that

priests for the service of the tabernacle, distributing them into three classes or orders, and appointing them their several services. Afterwards, in chap. v. follows that clear and excellent type of gospel purity, and Christian church-discipline, expressed in commanding the children of Israel to put out of the camp every leper, and every one that had a running issue, and whosoever was de-filed with the dead, both male and female; that they might not defile their camps in the midst of which the Lord dwelt. In the sixth chapter follow divers laws relating to restitution in cases of trespass, and to the trial of jealousy between men and their wives; to the vow of the Nazarites, to which is subjoined the form of that divine blessing which the Lord himself did dictate for the priests to pronounce upon the people. venth chapter contains the offerings of the princes at the dedication of both the tabernacle and the altar, &c. The consecration and purification of the Levites are set down in the eighth; a reinforcement of the passover, and the guiding of the Israelites by the cloud in the ninth chapter.

* This fire came either immediately from heaven, like lightning, or did issue from the pillar of the cloud, which went before the tabernacle; or that, which is here called fire, might be a hot, burning wind, in those desert places not unusual, and many times very pestilential, and, on this occasion, preternaturally raised in the rear of the army, to punish the stragglers, and such as leitered behind out of a pretence of weariness .- Le Clerc's com-

mentary.

ing. This exertion of divine power, instead of terrifying them into their duty. did but increase their murmuring. For being come to new quarters, they expected change of diet; and because God did not presently gratify them, they in contempt preferred the rank food of Egypt, onions, leeks, and garlic, to the delicious heavenly dainties with which God had daily fed them. Moses had often heard their murmuring, and patiently borne with them; but now that they were grown so numerous, and the greatness of their numbers demanding still more care and vigilance to govern and provide for them, the sense of the weight so great a charge occasioned, gave much uneasiness to Moses, who, in his address to God, complained of the heavy burden which the care of so numerous and mutinous a people brought upon him.

The Almighty no sooner heard the complaint of his faithful servant, than he relieved him from his cares, bidding him choose seventy men of the elders of Israel, and bring them with him to the tabernacle of the congregation. 'And there,' said the Lord, 'I will come down, and talk with thee; and I will endue them with the same spirit with which I have inspired thee, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee.' Moses accordingly brought the seventy elders of the children of Israel before the Lord, who kept his word with him; for, being inspired, they straightway prophesied. this inspiration was so extensive, that two of those seventy, though they came not out with the rest to the tabernacle, but remained behind in the camp, were taken in among the rest, and received the same impression of the Spirit, and prophesied as the others did. This so surprised a certain young man, that he ran from the camp to the tabernacle to acquaint Moses that Eldad and Medad, for so they were named, were prophesying in the camp.

Joshua, who as yet was not acquainted

Spirit, over-hearing this message, and thinking it some derogation from his master that they should prophesy, and not follow him, advised Moses to forbid them. But Moses, reproving him gently for his rashness, cried, 'Dost thou envy them upon my account? Would to God all the Lord's people were inspired, and that they might prophesy.'

Amidst divers complaints of Moses to God of his incapacity to sustain the heavy weight of so great a charge, as the direction of so numerous a people, he expostulated with the Lord on the impossibility of their being supplied with flesh in that place, because they were so numerous. The Lord, knowing the great fatigue Moses had gone through in the conduct of this people, bore with him, and only gave him this gentle rebuke: 'Is the Lord's hand shortened? Thou shalt see whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.'

Accordingly, when Moses with the elders were gone back to the camp, and had acquainted the people with it, a south wind arose, and drove vast numbers of quails from the sea coast within a mile of the camp, where they lay about a yard thick upon the ground.* The peo-

with the operations of the Lord by his | ple fell greedily to gathering the quails, which they (still distrusting God's providence, which had hitherto never failed them) did in such great quantities, as if they were to have no more.

> But God soon called them to a dreadful account for their insolent demand of flesh, and doubtful distrust of his power: for while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, God visited them with a very severe plague+ whereof many died, and were buried in the place, which from their lusting after flesh was called Kibroth-hattaavah, which signifies 'the graves of lust or concupiscence.'

CHAPTER VII.

Aaron and his sister Miriam enviously seek to raise a sedition; the latter is punished with leprosy, and having been made a general example to the people is healed .- Appointment of the spies, with their particular acts .- The people are threatened for murmuring at them. -God averts the judgment, but punishes those who spread a false report.-Sabbath breaking punished with death .- The rebellion and punishment of Korah .- The plague appeased.

From hence they took their journey to Hazeroth, which signifies 'palaces.' And here another unhappy accident befell them: Aaron and his sister Miriam observing the great power of Moses their brother with the people, and that God chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his sacred oracles to them, began to envy him: to give some colour to their quarrel, they pretended to fall out with him upon the account of his marrying a foreigner,

continued. / Maillet observes that birds of all kinds come to Egypt for refuge from the cold of a northern winter; and that the people catch them, pluck, and bury them in the burning sand for a few minutes, and thus prepare them for use. This is probably what is meant by 'spreading them all abroad round the camp.'—Dr A. Clarke.

^{*} We may consider the quails as 'flying within two cubits of the ground;' so that the Israelites could easily take as many of them as they wished, while flying within the reach of their hands or their clubs. The common notion is, that the quails were brought round about the camp, and fell there in such multitudes as to lie two feet thick upon the ground; but the Hebrew will not bear this version. The Vulgate has expressed bear this version. The vulgate has expressed the sense, 'And they flew in the air, two cubits high above the ground.' While these immense flocks were flying at this short distance from the ground, fatigued with the strong wind and the distance they had come, they were easily taken by the people; and as various flocks continued to succeed each other for two days and a night, enough for a month's provision might be collected in that time. If the quails had fallen about the tents, there was no need to have stood up two days and a night in gathering them; but if they were on the wing, as the text seems to suppose, it was necessary for them to use despatch, and avail themselves of the passing of these birds while it is further confirmed by Psalm lxxviii. 30, 31.

⁺ It probably seems to have been a suffocating, distemper, like the quinsey, which choked them as they were eating or soon after; for the words are very express: 'While the meat was in their mouth, the wrath of God fell upon them.' This

Moses's great gifts and authority, they added, 'What! hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?' Moses saw their discontent; and though he was naturally of a meek disposition, and could pardon an injury offered to himself, his righteous soul was grieved and incensed when mortals dared to insult the Majesty of heaven; but looking on this as a personal pique, he would not take notice of it.

However, God, who was more immediately concerned in this, resolved to vindicate himself and his faithful servant; for on a sudden calling for Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, at the door of the tabernacle, he sharply reprehended them for their insolence, asking them, how they durst speak against his servant Moses? 'Yout share,' said he, 'the great prophetic office indeed, and to you I have declared my will in dreams and visions; but with Moses I have conversed more familiarly, and I will speak face to face with him, and show him as much of my glory as he is capable of seeing.'

Upon this the Lord withdrew in great displeasure from them. Moses had the comfort of seeing himself justified: but Aaron, to his great confusion, saw his sister Miriam made a dreadful example of God's anger; for on a sudden she became a loathsome deformed leper; t and well

calling her Ethiopian,* and emulating knowing he deserved to share in this curse for his ungrateful murmuring, presently addressed himself to Moses, acknowledged their sin, begged pardon, and interceded for his sister, that she might be restored to her health.

> Good Moses, who was never wanting in charity even to his enemies, melted into pity, and complied with his request. But yet, to terrify others from moving sedition again, and because the offence was public, God resolved to make an example of Miriam in her cure, and therefore he commanded Moses to turn her out of the camp, as a common leper, for seven days, and then to receive her again.

> Miriam being returned to the camp, the Israelites removed to the desert of Paran; from whence, after several encampments, they came to Kadesh-barnea, on the frontiers of Canaan.

> Here Moses let them know that they were come near the promised land; and for their satisfaction, God commanded Moses to send twelve men, one of each tribe, to take a view of the country. He charged them to go up to the hills to observe whether the country was strong or weak; whether there were many inhabitants; how their towns were situated, and whether fortified; whether the soil was fertile or barren; whether it was planted with trees or not; what fruit they bore, and

[·] Zipporah, Moses's wife, was a Midianite; and because Midian bordered on Ethiopia, she was so called, and it is sometimes in holy scripture comprehended under this name. But here Zipporah is called Ethiopian in ridicule and spite, which they cught not to have done, for she having submitted to the law, ought to have been reckoned an Israelite, as Ruth and Rahab were.

[†] Miriam is called a prophetess. ‡ A leprosy, as well as all other distempers such as the scurvy, ring-worm, itch, &c.) which bear resemblance to it, proceeds originally from a previous ill disposition both in the blood and juices, but the more immediate cause of it is an infinity of small imperceptible worms that insinuate themselves between the flesh and skin, which first prey upon the scarf-skin, then upon the inner skin, and afterwards upon the extremities of the nerves and muscles, from whence arises a total

corruption of the whole mass of blood, and all the other symptoms attending it. But the leprosy here inflicted upon Miriam was sudden and in-stantaneous. The juices of her body were not corrupted by a gradual decay, but turned at once into these corroding animals. And as this was a fit punishment for her pride and detraction, so by its being inflicted on her, and not on Aaron, it seems not improbable that she was first in the transgression, and drew Aaron (who seems, in some instances, to be a person of too much facility) over to her party. Aaron indeed, by his office, was appointed to judge of leprosy, which he could not have done, had himself been infected with it; and as he was lately consecrated his high-priest, God, for the preservation of his authority, might not think it proper to make him so soon become vile and contemptible in the eyes of the people, as this distemper was known to make men.— Calinet's Dissertation, and Patrick's Commentary.

to bring some of it; for then was the time when the first grapes were ripe,—that was, in July.

With these instructions the twelve spies set torward; and having taken a view of the country from north to south, in their return they passed through a fertile valley which abounded in vines, where they cut down a branch with but one cluster of grapes on it, but that of so vast a weight and bigness, that they were forced to carry it upon a staff between two.*

Nor was this the only product of this happy soil; the golden fig, and beautiful pomegranate, adorned the trees, and variety of fruits loaded the luxuriant branches. Of each of these they took a sample; and upon their leaving the place, from the great plenty of grapes, they called it the valley of Eshcol, which signifies a cluster of grapes.

Having spent forty days in viewing and observing the country, they returned to the camp of Israel at Kadesh; and having showed the fruits of the land to Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation, they related the observations they had made in their journey, and said, 'We have been in the country to which you have sent us. It is a fertile and plentiful land; but the inhabitants of it are powerful. There are great cities with strong walls. We have seen there men of the race of Anak, warlike men, and of a gigantic stature. The Amalekites inhabit

the south part of the land; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites, on the mountains; and the Canaanites, on the seacoasts, and the river Jordan.

Such a relation could not but terrify a people possessed with suspicions and discontent; and they soon discovered their fear. But Caleb, one of those that were sent to discover the country, to pacify them, said, 'Let us make ourselves masters of the country, for we are strong enough to conquer those people.'

But the mutineers declared against engaging in a war, wishing they were in Egypt again; and choosing rather to die in the wilderness, than to fall by the sword, and have their wives and children enslaved. In short, they proposed to choose themselves a chief and return to Egypt.

This so deeply affected Moses, that notwithstanding they were so obstinately bent upon their own ruin, he and Aaron, in the presence of the assembly, fell on their faces to deprecate the vengeance which they feared God would let fly at these rebellious mutineers. Whilst Caleb and Joshua, through excess of sorrow for the people's blasphemy, rending their clothes, boldly stood up and endeavoured to persuade them that they might, by God's help, overcome the inhabitants of that country; they said, 'The land that we passed through is indeed a rich and fertile land, abounding with all things necessary for life. If we please the Lord, he will bring us into this land, and give it us. Do not therefore, by rebelling against him, forfeit his promise and protection. Nor be afraid of the people of the land, whom we shall as surely conquer as we eat our food, and as easily; for God hath withdrawn his care of them; and if the Lord continue it to you, ye have nothing to fear.'

This speech made so little impression upon them, that in a tumultuous manner they called out to stone them; and which they had probably done, had not God

^{*} The vines and grapes are prodigiously large in those eastern and southern parts of the world. Strabo says, that in Margiana, and other places, the vines were so big, that two men could scarce compass them; and that they produced bunches of grapes two cubits long. Olearius tells us, that not far from Astracan, in Persia, he saw vines that a man could hardly grasp with both arms. And Huetius affirms, that in Crete, Chios, and other islands of the Archipelago, there are bunches of grapes from ten to forty pounds in weight. Stackhouse.—Dandini, though an Italian, seems to have been surprised at the extraordinary size of the grapes of Mount Libanus, which he describes as equal to a prune. It is no wonder the Israelites were struck with them; because, according to Norden, the grapes of Egypt, though excellent, are very small.—Harmer.

miraculously interposed, by sending his glory, which visibly appeared at that instant in the tabernacle of the congregation before them all.

While the people were thus contemning the power of the Most High, Moses and Aaron at humble distance prostrated themselves before the Lord; and God, being highly incensed with this insolence of the Israelites, told Moses he would send the plague that should extirpate this people, and would make him prince of a more numerous and powerful nation. But good Moses, as he had before done, preferred the interest of an unworthy people, and the honour of God, to all selfish views, representing to the Lord, that if he destroyed the Israelites, the Egyptians, and other nations thereabout, who saw he had taken them into his protection, would not fail to say he was not able to carry them into the land he had promised them. Then imploring God's mercy, and with repeated and importunate entreaties begging pardon for the people, God at length suffered himself to be prevailed on, and to satisfy Moses, he pronounced them pardoned; but it was with this restriction; for, reproaching them with their ingratitude, who had so often and wonderfully tasted of his bounty in providing against their wants, screening them from their enemies, and preserving them in all dangers; since they had so often provoked him with their disobedience, he declared that not one of those who had murmured should enter into the promised land, except Caleb and Joshua; and they should wander about there with their children for the space of forty years. And though God at the pressing entreaty of Moses did reverse the sentence of sudden death upon the whole congregation of murmurers, yet the ten false spies, the immediate authors of the rebellion, who had brought an evil report upon the good land, were punished with death, by the plague.

But Caleb and Joshua, who had done their duty, in giving a faithful account of their observations, were not only preserved, but commended of God, who gave them his promise that they should live to enter and take possession of the good land.

On the first report of these things, the children of Israel are said to have mourned greatly. But by their actions it doth not appear they were any better disposed: for, changing their minds on a sudden, from a cowardly fearfulness to a presumptuous rashness, the next morning they declared, 'We are ready to go to the place whereof the Lord hath spoken to us.'

But this was undertaken in their rebellious, obstinate temper, and was adding sin to sin. Nor was Moses ignorant of it; for he endeavoured to restrain them, and expostulated with them on the danger, telling them their enterprise was against the express command of God, that it would not prosper, and forbid them going upon pain of being defeated and slain, assuring them, that God had left them, and that the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes in the mountains before them.

These admonitions had no weight with those obstinate people. They presumptuously supposed the boldness of the attempt would wipe off their former cowardice, and reinstate them in God's favour; and though the ark of the Lord, which was to go before the host, went not with them, nor Moses their general at the head of them, yet they resolutely marched to the top of the hills, where the enemy surprised, defeated, and slew many of them, and pursued the rest as far as Hormah.

After this, though it was but eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea; yet through their disobedience, they spent near two years in going that eleven days' journey. And which is still more strange, turning back from Kadesh-barnea, and being near the confines of the promised land, they were eight and thirty years more wandering in the wilderness, before they could come to the borders of the promised land again.

Moses having led them back again into said time, eighteen several removes or dislodgments, and at last they returned to Kadesh-barnea, near the place from whence they went.

Many circumstances worthy of notice happened to the Israelites during their continuance in the wilderness.

The first of which is of a man, who by a post-facto law, was adjudged to be stoned to death for violating the sabbath, by gatnering sticks on that day, the celebration of which God had strictly enjoined, though there was no penalty annexed to the breach of it. Those who brought the offender before Moses, knew he would determine justly; and committing the man to safe custody, Moses inquired of God what he should do in this case?-who immediately, from his heavenly oracle, returned this answer, 'That the criminal should be conveyed without the camp and there be stoned to death;'* which was executed accordingly.

The Israelites now increased in wickeddesert, toward the Red sea, they con- ness and impiety, and vexed the souls of tinued thereabout, making in the afore- the few pious among them, the haughty Korah, great-grandson of Levi, separated from Moses and Aaron, and having seduced Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, of Reuben's family, and drawn in two hundred and fifty Levites to his party, that were men of fame and interest among the people, he made most grievous complaint against Moses and Aaron, charging them with pride, in usurping upon the liberties of the people, who, they said, were as holy as themselves.

> Moses, on hearing this, fell on his face; and soon after rising from that humble posture, he, with great courage and assurance, let them know, that the next day the Lord would decide the controversy, and would make it appear who were his servants, and who was holy, and would admit whom he had chosen to come near him.

Then, with his usual calmness and serenity of mind, he argued the matter with them, mildly rebuked their insolence, and told them that they took too much upon themselves.

But in a more particular manner he addressed himself to Korah and the Levites that joined him, and said, 'Hear me, ye sons of Levi; is it a matter of so light concern, that the God of Israel hath distinguished you from the rest of Israel, to admit you to the more immediate service of the tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation, and minister to them? Is not this an honour sufficient to satisfy

^{*} We are not to suppose that the culprit was exposed to the unbridled fury of the thousands of Israel; this would be brutality, not justice, for the very worst of tempers and passions might be produced and fostered by such a procedure. The Jews themselves tell us that their manner of stoning was this: they brought the condemned person without the camp, because his crime had rendered him unclean, and whatever was unclean must be put without the camp. When they came within four cubits of the place of execution, they stripped the criminal, if a man, leaving him nothing but a cloth about the waist. The place on which he was to be executed was elevated, and the witnesses went up with him to it, and laid their hands upon him,-for it was by this ceremony that the people who heard him curse bore their public testimony in order to his being fully convicted, and without that his punishment would not have been lawful. Then one of the witnesses struck him with a stone upon the loins; if he was not killed with that blow, then the witnesses took up a great stone, as much as two men could lift, and threw it upon his breast. This was the coup de grace, and finished the tragedy. When a man was stoned by the mob, then brutal rage armed every man, justice was set aside, and the will and fury of the people were law, judge, jury, and executioner. Such disgraceful stonings as these, were no doubt frequent among the Jews .- A. Clarke.

⁺ This is a phrase often used to express divine adoration and application to God for help; and good reason there is to believe that at this time Moses, who was well acquainted with the gracious and ready assistance of God in time of need, might apply himself to the Lord for protection against this mutinous crew, as apprehending some violence from them, who in this tumultuous manner attacked him. And it is very reasonable to think that, whilst he lay in this humble posture God appear ed to him, and both comforted and advised him; for presently after he spoke to the rebels with great assurance, and, to vindicate himself, put the matter between him and them upon trial the next

your ambitious spirit, but that you must aim at the priesthood too? This is the cause of your clamours; and for this ye have moved the people to sedition. But be assured, whatever ye may pretend against Aaron, this insult is against the Lord, as it is against his dispensations, that ye murmur and conspire.'

Dathan and Abiram stood at a distance, while Moses talked with the rest, and therefore he sent for them to come to him; but they surlily returned for an answer, that they would not come. And to retort his own expressions upon himself, they added, 'Is it a matter of so small moment, that thou hast brought us out of a land that floweth with plenty, to kill us in the desert? Thou affectest dominion, and wouldest make thyself prince of us also. Notwithstanding thy fair promises, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, nor given as inheritance of fields and vineyards; but when we were ready to take possession of the promised land, thou hast turned us back into this barren desert, to repeat the fatigues and hardship we had before undergone. We will not come.'

These unjust reproaches highly provoked Moses, who, instead of returning any ill language to them, addressing himself to God, said, 'Respect not thou their offering; for though they reflect thus unjustly upon me, I have not taken so much as an ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.' Then summoning Korah and all his company to meet him and Aaron before the Lord next day, he ordered them to bring their censers ready prepared with incense in them, and to appear all before the Lord.

Accordingly, on the morrow they came with great confidence: and having set fire to the incense in their censers, they boldly planted themselves in the door of the tabernacle with Moses and Aaron; and to bid the greater defiance to these holy men, they had persuaded all the congregation to side with them.

This impious and presumptuous behaviour so provoked the Almighty, that he resolved to take the matter into his own hand; and darting forth his glory upon the tabernacle, he commanded Moses and Aaron to withdraw, that he might consume the rebels. But the two good men, knowing that the people were drawn into this insolence by the wicked arts of Korah and his party, prostrated themselves before the Lord, and by their prayers interceded for the people: 'O God, thou God of the spirits of all flesh,' said they, 'shall one man sin, and wilt thou be angry with all?" Their prayers were heard as soon as delivered, and God bid them command the people to withdraw, who, frightened with the amazing splendour that broke from the cloud, readily took the warning, and drew off from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who came boldly out, and stood daring at the doors of their tents, with their wives and families. Then Moses addressing himself to the people, said, ' By this you shall know that the Lord has commissioned me to do what I have done. and that I have undertaken nothing of my If these men die the common own head. way of nature, or be visited as other men, then take it for granted the Lord hath not sent me; but if he deal with them after a strange and unusual manner, and the earth, opening her mouth, swallow them up alive, then shall ye understand that these men have provoked the Lord.'

Moses had no sooner spoken these words, but terrible convulsions heaved the labouring earth, the surface of which cleaving asunder, Korah and his faction, with their goods and families,* were swallowed

^{*} On a close inspection of Num. xvi. 27., we shall find that the sons and the little ones of Dathan and Abiram alone are mentioned. 'So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out—and their wives, and their sons, and their little ones.' Here is no mention of the children of Korah, they therefore escaped, while it appears those of Dathan and Abiram perished with their fathers. And it is expressly mentioned in chap, xxvi. 11, that the children of Korah died

them they perished.

The rest of the people that stood round them, and saw their dismal fate, being frightened with the loud cries and shrieks of the departing mutineers, fled away for fear the earth should have swallowed them

In the mean time God, to complete his vengeance on the rest of the leaders in this rebellion, who had profanely attempted to offer incense contrary to the law, sent down fire from heaven, and destroyed the two hundred and fifty men that had joined with Korah.* The censers, ton which they intended to offer, remained amidst the congregation, which God had ordered to be preserved, but not for the same use as formerly, nor in the same form: therefore he commanded Moses to direct Eleazer, Aaron's son, to beat them out into small plates, and fix them to the altar of the burnt-offerings; assigning this reason for it, 'That it might be for a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stranger, or any that was not of Aaron's family, should presume to offer incense

up alive, and the ground closing upon | before the Lord, lest he died the death of Korah and his company.'

This judgment, severe as it was, had no other effect on the Israelites than the former; for the next day they took occasion to mutiny afresh, murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and charging them with the murder of so many persons. They well knowing the unruly nature of this obstinate people, and fearing to what degree of madness and violence they might have proceeded, took sanctuary in the tabernacle; t where, as soon as they had entered, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared, which was a sure token that the Lord had something to say to them.

Immediately God called to Moses and Aaron, and bid them be gone from the rest of the congregation; for he would consume them in a moment. They thereupon fell down, as they used to do on such occasions, to intercede for the people; but, as early as they were in supplicating, vengeance was before them; for the Lord, provoked by their repeated rebellions, had already sent a plague & among them; which Moses perceiving, bid Aaron take a censer, and put fire in it from the altar, and incense; and hasten to the congregation to make an atonement for them, Aaron did as Moses directed him, and standing between the dead and the living, he prayed for the people, and the plague. ceased.

However, in that short space of time that the plague raged amongst them, there died fourteen thousand, seven hundred men, without reckoning those who perished in the sedition with Korah and his; company.

not in this destruction which involved the entire families of the other two.

* There were two sorts of traitors; the earth swallowed up the one, the fire the other. All the elements agree to serve the vengeauce of their Maker. Nadab and Abihu brought fit persons, but unfit fire to God; these Levites bring the right fire, but unwarranted persons before him; fire from God consumes both. It is a dangerous thing to usurp sacred functions.—Hall.

+ The two hundred and fifty princes had not offered any incense, being prevented by death: however, it may be presumed that they had lighted their incense at the holy fire; by which they obtained—at least in the opinion of the people—a sort of consecration. The Lord therefore, to keep up among them the reputation and esteem of things devoted, would not have them put to profane uses; and to make a difference between his own institutions and men's contrivances (especially those of wicked men) he ordered all those brazen censers to be wrought into broad plates, and to cover the altar with them; to the intent that these brazen plates being polished bright, might by their lustre put the people in mind of the offence of those that were once the owners of them; and by seeing them often-as they must do every time they looked upon the altar-they might be warned of the same crime.

This shows to whom we ought to fly, in any persecution or distress; and that God is our only refuge and protection. Whence the great fruit and advantage of persecution appears, that it compels us to apply to him.

f Plague is a comprehensive term, as we see in the plagues of Egypt, which are all called plagues, though they were all different from each other. We may reasonably think that it was the pestilence or infectious sickness.

CHAPTER VIII.

God causes Aaron's rod to bud, and to be left as a monument to the people, in order to prevent their future murmuring .- Moses supplies the people with water out of the rock .- Death of Aaron .- The plague of fiery serpents .- Remedied by looking up to the brazen one set up by Moses .- The Israelites obtain victory over several princes, who endeavoured to oppose their march.

God having in so dreadful a manner declared against those who opposed the government of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron, to end all contests and disputes among the ambitious and aspiring, resolved by a convincing miracle to put an end to the controversy, and establish and confirm the priesthood in the family in which he had placed it.

In order to this, he commanded Moses to take a rod from each tribe, and to write upon it the name of the prince of that tribe to which it belonged; and on the rod of the tribe of Levi to write Aaron's name; which when he had done, he was to lay up these twelve rods in the tabernacle, before the ark of the testimony, where God was to declare his will farther to them. And to let them know that God would determine the controversy, and put an end to their murmurings, he would cause the rod of that man to blossom whom he would choose.

Moses, who never failed immediate compliance with the divine command, took a rod from the prince of each tribe, wrote his name upon it, and laid up all the rods together in the tabernacle. And the next day he went in and brought forth all the rods, and in the presence of all the people he gave each man his rod, which they found to be the same as they had delivered to Moses over night, except Aaron's, which had not only budded, but blossomed, and bore ripe almonds.* This was a

convincing proof that God had singled out Aaron to the priestly office.

To preserve the memory therefore of the determination of this controversy, the Lord bid Moses bring Aaron's rod back again, and lay it before the ark of the tabernacle, to be kept for a memorial of their rebellion: and that seeing it they might forbear to murmur; and so prevent sudden death.

These obstinate people now began to be sensible of the justice of their punishment; and since God in his own house visited them for their sins, they enumerated the several ways they had been punished.+

Behold, said they, we die; we perish; we are all lost; and because God had in the tabernacle expressed his displeasure more than once in punishing them in an exemplary manner, they cried out, 'If we approach the tabernacle we die;' not considering, that their own iniquities drew the justice of God upon them in this place, for which he had ordered the altar to be covered with remarkable shining brass, to put them in mind of their obedience.

The next historical matter & we meet

able soil and chmate it grows to twenty feet in height, is one of the most noble flourishing trees in nature; its flowers are of a delicate red, and it puts them forth early in March, having begun to bud in January. It has its name from a root which signifies to awake, because it buds and flowers sooner than most other trees .- A. Clarke.

† The Chaldee text describes their murmuring thus: we die by the sword; as in the case of their daring to enter the promised land contrary to Moses's advice, when they were slain by the Canaanites and Amalekites. The earth swallows us up; as in the case of Korah and his associates The pestilence doth consume us; as in the case of the 14,700 that died of it.

I As being made of the brazen censers, which belonged to the two hundred and fifty princes that

had joined Korah.

§ The history breaks off at the seventeenth chapter of Numbers, and begins not again till the twentieth. By the interposition of these matters in these two chapters, we miss the account how the Israelites came to Kadesh again in the wilderness of Zin; only Moses briefly reciting some of their faults, tells us, that after they had been beatcommunis, or common almond tree. In a favour- en by the Amalekites and Canaanites, they turned

^{*} That is, on the same rod or staff were found tuds, blossoms, and ripe fruit. It has been thought by some that Aaron's staff (and perhaps the staves of all the tribes) was made out of the amygdala

with is the Israelites being at Kadesh; where Miriam (who was sister to Aaron and Moses, and elder* than both) died, and was buried there. In this place the Israelites, impatient of any inconveniency for want of water, began (as usual) to exclaim against Moses and Aaron, saying, Why have ye brought the Lord's people into the wilderness to kill them and their cattle? Why did you persuade us to leave the fertile land of Egypt to bring us into this barren place, which affords neither water to quench our thirst, nor fruits to satisfy our hunger? Would to God we had perished with our brethren before the Lord.

The servants of God according to their usual custom addressed themselves to God for help; who bids Moses take the rod, and that he and Aaron should assemble the people; and then, said the Lord, Speak ye to the rock in their sight, and it shall yield water for them.'

Moses hereupon taking the rod+ from before the Lord, went, and with Aaron's assistance assembled the people together before the Lord. Moses hitherto had paid an exact and absolute obedience to all the commands God had enjoined him; but now, in deviating from his instructions, though seemingly but a little, he committed the greatest miscarriage of his whole life; for he was bid to speak to

the rock before the people; but instead of doing it, he speaks to the people, saying, 'Hear now, ye rebels! must we fetch water for you out of the rock?' in. which he not only expressed impatience and heat of spirit, but incredulity, making a doubt of what God had positively promised.

It is certain he disobeyed God in this; for he smote the rock twice t with the rod, and immediately there issued out water in great plenty; by which we may see, God would not lose the honour of his miracle for his servant's fault, but caused the water to flow from the rock. But to show he expected an entire obedience to his commands, though Moses had been his faithful servant in performing all his instructions before; yet now, for the breach of his disobedience, he denounces to Moses and Aaron, who was in the same transgression with him, their doom in these words; 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me § in the sight of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not have the honour of leading the people into the land which I have given them.' | From this unhappy accident, the place was called Meribah, which signifies, 'the water of contradiction.'

Moses patiently received the divine chastisement, but continued in his com-

and took their way in the wilderness along the Red sea, as God had commanded Moses, and compassed Mount Seir many days, (which both Tremellius and our Bible in their notes reckon eight and thirty years,) till at length the Lord said, 'Ye have compassed this mountain long enough, turn ye northward.'

^{*} Miriam died four months before Aaron and eleven months before Moses, being at her death about 130. Josephus tells us she was buried with great solemnity; and Eusebius relates that her sepulchre was extant in his time at Kadesh, not far from the city Petra, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa.—Stackhouse.

[†] The text does not expressly tell us, whether of the rods this was; that with which he did so many miracles in Egypt formerly, or that by which they were so lately reclaimed from a rebellion: it seems most likely to be the latter; because it is called 'the rod from before the Lord,' and which yet bore a miracle upon it, the buds and almonds.

If it should be alleged in favour of Moses, that when he was sent to the rock before, he was bid to take his rod in his hand, and smite the rock, that the water might come forth; and that from thence he might infer, he was also now to smite the rock with his rod: it may be said, that as he then followed his instruction, so he was to have done here. He smote the rock then, because he was bid; but he did not speak to it, because he was not bid: so now he should have spoken to it, because he was bid; and not have smitten it, because he was not bid.

of That is, you should show them that I am holy, omnipotent, merciful, and true; and that I can and will perform my promise to this wicked and ungrateful people, as ye know, and ought to remember I have often done.

This was a sore mortification to Moses not to see the promised Canaan, being thereby frustrated of the fruit of his long and troublesome conduct. By which we ought to learn to die to the world and ourselves, and live only to God.

mand and care of the people, and intending to decamp, that he might secure their march from Kadesh, he sent an embassy. to the king of Edom, upon whose borders they now were, to inform him of the travels of the Israelites, desiring leave to pass through his country, on account that they were both descended from Isaac and Rebekah; assuring him that they would commit no acts of hostility, nor trespass in his fields or vineyards, nor so much as drink of his water, without paying for it, but only travel on the king's highway. The inhospitable Edomite not only refused them passage, but with a potent army came out to defend his frontiers; and oppose the Israelites should they attempt to pass.

They therefore turned another way, and marching from Kadesh came to mount Hor, near the borders of Edom. now the time drawing near that the children of Israel were to enter the promised land, into which the Lord had told Aaron he should not enter, because of his transgression at Meribah, God gave Aaron notice of his approaching death, and commanded Moses to take Aaron, and Eleazar his son, who was to succeed him in the office of high-priest, to the mount, there to strip Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; which when Moses had done, Aaron died on the top of mount Hor, being a hundred twenty and three years old: and when the people saw that Aaron was dead, they bewailed him thirty days.

It was the beginning of the fifth month of the fortieth year of their travels from Egypt, when they were upon the borders of Canaan; and Arad, one of the kings of Canaan, that dwelt in the south, hearing which way they came, went out and fought them, and took some of them prisoners. This defeat brought them to a sense of their duty; and knowing they were now upon the borders of the promised land, they made a vow to the Lord, promising that if he would deliver this

people into their hands, they would utterly destroy their cities. God took them at their word, and gave them such success, that at Hormah* they engaged these Canaanites, and defeated them, took their cities and utterly destroyed them.

Elated with this success, they dislodged from mount Hor, and took their way by the Red sea, marching round Edom, through which they had been denied passage, and forbidden to force their way. And because the way was long, the passes uneasy, and the country barren, they, forgetting their late success, and reflecting only on the present discouragements, relapsed into their old humour of murmuring, complaining directly against God and Moses: 'Wherefore,' say they, 'have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness, where there is neither meat, nor drink, but this manna, which our stomachs loathe?' To punish this repeated instance of impiety and distrust of his care, God sent fiery serpents + among

* This seems to be the same place at which the Amalekites had beaten and chased the Israelites about eight and thirty years before.

about eight and thirty years before.

† The scraph is a flying scrpent, the only one that has wings. The word properly signifies to burn; and this name was probably given it, either because of its colour, or because of the heat and thirst which its bite occasions. Its wings are not feathers, like the wings of birds; but rather like those of bats. When the Arabians go to gather the aromatic reed, or cassia, of which these ser-pents are very fond, they cover all their heads, ex-cept their eyes, with skins to secure themselves from the bite of the serpent, which is very dangerous. As Moses represents these serpents to have caused a great mortality, so the heathen writers concur in testifying, that the deserts, wherein the Israelites journeyed, produced serpents of so venemous a kind, that their hiting was deadly, beyond the power of any art then known to cure it, ancients observed in general, that the most barren and sandy deserts had the greatest number and most venemous of serpents; Diodorus remarks, this more particularly of the sands in Africa; but it was equally true of the wilderness in which the Israelites journeyed. Serpents and scorpious were bere, according to Moses, as natural as drought and want of water, Deut. viii. 15. Strabo's obser-vation agrees with Moses; and both Strabo and Diodorus concur, that the serpents which were so numerous here, were of the most deadly kind, and that there was no cure for their biting .- Calmet and Stackhouse.

Lord on their account, in pity to their past his country. distress, addressed himself in prayer to take away the serpents, but leaving them to be a farther scourge, and make them more sensible of their transgression, provided a remedy to prevent their death, and heal their hurts: for he ordered Moses to make a serpent * of a fiery colour, and to set it up on a high pole, that the people, who were bitten by the fiery serpents, might, by looking up to it, be recovered.

Moses accordingly made the form of a serpent in brass, and set it up as a banner; and whoever afterwards was bitten by a serpent, if he looked upon that brazen serpent, recovered.

The Israelites at this time were at Punon, whither they were come from Zalmonah, their first camp, after they removed from about mount Hor. From Punon they went and encamped at Oboth, and thence to lie-abarim, in the desert that is before Moab to the eastward.

Decamping from thence they came to Zared, and afterwards encamped by the river of Arnon, which is in the desert, and runs to the frontiers of the Amorites; for it divides them from the Moabites. They held on their march, and at length came into the plains of Moab, on the banks of Jordan, opposite to Jericho, to the top of Pisgah.

them, which destroyed a great number of From hence Moses sent ambassadors to these rebels. This punishment brought Sihon king of the Amorites, to demand a the rest to their senses, who, flying to in- passage through his country, promising jured Moses, acknowledged their guilt, not to break into the fields or vineyards, and cried for mercy: Moses, though he nor to drink of the water, but only to had lately incurred the displeasure of the march along the highway, till they were

The Amorite prince, fearing to admit so God for them; who did not immediately formidable a body into the heart of his kingdom, positively denied them passage: and, thinking it better policy to attack than he attacked, gathering what force he could, marched out to give them battle at Jahaz, where Israel routed him, and seized his country. They likewise took Heshbon, and the villages about it, which Sihon had before taken from the Moabites; and being thus possessed of the Amorites' land, they dwelt there.

> After this, Moses sent out forces to discover Jazar, another city of the Amorites, which they took with all its territories, and drove out the people that dwelt there. Then turning another way, they marched towards Bashan, where the giant Og, another Amorite king, reigned.

^{*} This brazen serpent, a significant type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being lifted up as an ensign for the nations, gives life and salvation to all them that in true faith look up to him, remained among the Jews 700 years, to the time of Hezekiah king of Judah; who in a holy zeal, pursuant to God's command, removing the high places, breaking the images, and cutting down the groves, broke also in pieces this brazen serpent among the

⁺ Bashan is one of the most fruitful countries in the world, lying eastward of Jordan and the sea of Tiberias, northward of the river Jabbok, westward of the mountains of Gilead, and south of Hermon and the kingdom of Geshuri. Besides villages, it contained sixty fenced cities. It was peculiarly famous for its rich pasture, excellent flocks and herds, and stately oaks. Mr Buckingham gives the following account of this country:—" We ascended the steep on the north side of the Zerkah, or Jabbok, and on reaching the summit, came again on a beautiful plain, of an elevated level, and still covered with a very rich soil. We had now quitted the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, and entered into that of Og king of Bashan. We continued our way over this elevated tract, continuing to behold with surprise and admiration a beautiful country on all sides of us; its plains covered with a fertile soil,—the hills covered with forests,—at every new turn presenting the most magnificent landscapes that could be imagined. Amongst the trees the oak was frequently seen; and we know that this territory produced them of old. Some learned commentators, indeed, believing that no oaks grew in these supposed desert regions, have translated the word (Ezek. xxvii. 6.) by alders, to prevent the appearance of inaccuracy in the inspired writer. The expression of fat bulls of Bashan seemed to us equally inconsistent as applied to the herds of a country generally thought to be a

troops drew out to give the Israelites battle; but lest they should be discouraged at the sight of this formidable army, who exceeded the common size of nature, fear nothing, for he had delivered them into their hands, and they should make as easy a conquest over them, as they did over Sihon king of the Amorites.

Israel thus encouraged joined battle, and slew king Og* and his sons, and all

desert, in common with the whole tract which is laid down in our modern maps as such between the Jordan and the Euphrates; but we could now fully comprehend, not only that the bulls of this luxuriant country might be proverbially fat, but that its possessors too might be a race renowned for strength and comeliness of person. The gen-eral face of this region improved as we advanced farther into it; and every new direction of our path opened upon us views which surprised and charmed us by their grandeur and their beauty. ·Lofty mountains gave an outline of the most magnificent character; flowing beds of secondary hills softened the romantic wildness of the picture; gentle slopes, clothed with wood, gave a rich variety of tints hardly to be imitated by the pencil; deep valleys filled with murmuring streams and verdant meadows, offered all the luxuriance of cultivation, and herds and flocks gave life and animation to scenes as grand, as beautiful, and as highly picturesque as the genius or taste of a Claude' could either invent or desire.'

* The description of this gigantic king, who was the last of the race of the giants, whose stature we may guess at by the size of his bed, which being made of iron for strength, was thirteen feet and a half for the length, and two yards, or six feet, for the breadth. The people of the East use a kind of settle, called a duan, or divan, or sofa; consisting of boards raised from the ground, about five feet broad, and one and a half high, reaching sometimes quite round the room, sometimes only along a part of it: it is covered with a carpet, and furnished with mattresses, to sit upon cross-legged after the Turkish fashion, and with cushions placed against the wall to lean upon. They serve for beds at night. This custom may serve to illustrate the dimensions of 'the bedstead' of Qg. English ideas have measured this by English bedsteads. But when we reflect that neither the divan nor its covering is so nearly fitted to the size of the person as our bedsteads in England are, we may make, in the necessary dimensions of his 'bedstead,' no inconsiderable allowance for the repose of this martial prince.—The Mosaic account of men of a gigantic stature, who were inured to deeds of law-less violence and rapine, is confirmed by the Greek and Latin poets, who relate that there were giants in the first ages of the world, and also by the Greek and Latin historians, particularly by Pau-

This powerful prince with his gigantic | his people. They also took all his cities, threescore in number, all fenced with high walls, gates and bars, besides open towns and villages a great number; destroying utterly the inhabitants, but keeping all the Moses, by the command of God, bid them cattle and the spoil of those cities for a prey to themselves,+ as they had done before in the case of Sihon, the other Amorite king.

CHAPTER IX.

Balah king of Moab fears the inroads of the Israelites .- Sends messengers to Balaam to persuade him to curse them .- Balaam's mercenary conduct remarkably chastised.—Balak's sacrifice.—Balaam's parable.—Balaam prophecies the success of the Israelites .- They are drawn by the Moabites into whoredom and idolatry .- They are severely punished for their sins.

ENCOURAGED with these successes the Israelites marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on this side Jordan by Jeri-The approach of these victorious strangers struck a terror wherever they came, and the fame of their late success against the Amorites put the king of Moab and his people into a terrible con-

sanias and Philostratus among the Greeks, and Pliny among the Romans, who have recorded that, on opening some sepulchres, the bodies of men were found to be much larger in old times. Josephus also speaks of bones seen in his days, of a magnitude almost exceeding credibility. testimonies of historians of former ages to the generally gigantic stature of men, furnish a satisfactory answer to the petty cavils of those who object to the credibility of Moses, from his mentioning the gigantic size of Og's bedstead. (Deut. iii. 11.) But men of very large size are occasionally seen even in our days. Some allowance may also be made for royal vanity; as Alexander the Great ordered his soldiers to enlarge the size of their beds that they might give to the Indians, in succeeding ages, a great idea of the prodigious stature

of the Macedonian soldiers.—Horne, &c.

† So they were commanded, where the social laws, or laws of war and heraldry are set down: by which they were required upon their approach to any city, to offer peace first, which if the inhabitants accepted, and surrendered to them, they should only make them tributaries. But if they refused peace, and put them to besiege and storm the place, they should, when they had taken it, put all the men to the sword; but might keep the women and children with the cattle and other spoil for themselves.

sternation.* Balak the king knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel, advised with the chiefs of Midian,† to whom he proposed the common danger of these invaders: the result of their consultation was this; king Balak should send messengers to Balaam,‡ the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor, a city in Mesopotamia, to invite and bribe him to curse the Israelites; for they had so great an opinion of his skill and power in

sternation.* Balak the king knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel, advised with the chiefs of Midian, to whom he proposed the common danger of these invaders: the result to invite him to go with them to Balak.

* If the Moabites had known the protection they were under, they needed not to have been afraid, for if they would have been quiet they were particularly exempted from the sword of Israel.

† The Midianites were neighbours and confederates with the Moabites; therefore Balak represented to them the danger, and asked their

advice and assistance.

‡ It is a question much debated among commentators, whether Balaam was a true prophet of the Lord, or only a magician and diviner or fortune-teller; and the arguments on each side are so strong, as to lead to the conclusion that he was both—a Chaldean priest, magician, and astrologer by profession, a prophet by accident. He dwelt in a country, which, from time immemorial, was celebrated for the observation of the stars; and the astronomy of antiquity was never, perhaps, free from astrology. His fame, in every thing which at that time formed the science of Chaldea, filled Asia: the honours and presents which he received, show the high estimation in which he was held. It is a circumstance, moreover, worthy of remark, that his religion was not a pure idolatry. He knew and served the LORD: the knowledge and worship of the true God did not simultaneously disappear among the nations; as is evident from the circumstances recorded of Melchisedek, Jethro, and perhaps, Abimelech. The history of Balaam presents the last trace of the knowledge of the true God, which is found out of Canaan. If the rites celebrated by him were not devoid of superstition; if it be difficult to put a favourable construction upon the enchantments which Moses seems to attribute to him, it only follows that Balaam, like Laban, blended error and truth. The mixed religion, thus professed by him, furnishes a key to his mysterious history. Sacerdotal maledictions were at that time regarded as inevitable scourges, and the people of Moab and Midian thought that they should find in Moab an adversary, who was capable of opposing Moses; and it was only opposing a prophet to a prophet, a priest to a priest. In the judgment of these nations, Moses was a formidable magician; and, as Pharaoh had done forty years before, they sought out, on their part, a magician, to defend them: they wished to curse the Israelites in the very name of Jehovah, whom they supposed to be a more powerful deity than their own god. These circumstances will enable us without difficulty to conceive how Balaam received the gift of pro-

phecy. The terms employed by the sacred historian are so express, as to leave no doubt that he, occasionally, at least, was inspired. Besides, his predictions are extant; nor does it avail to say, that Balaam was a wicked man. The gift of prophecy did not always sanctify the heart. (See Matt. vii. 22.) If, then, we refer to the circumstances of that memorable day, we shall find in that dispensation reasons worthy of the divine wisdom. The Hebrews had arrived on the borders of Canaan, which country they were on the point of entering; they knew that Moses would not enter it; and in order to encourage the people to effect the conquest of the promised land, even without Moses, God caused one who was hostile to them to utter predictions of their victory. How encouraging must this circumstance have been to the Hebrews, at the same time that it would prove to them (who were about to come into continual contact with the Canaanites) how vain and useless against them would be the superstitions of those idolatrous nations. The three hills on which Balaam offered sacrifices in the presence of the Israelitish camp, remind us of one of the prejudices of ancient times. The ancients believed that a change of aspect induced a change of condition .- Horne.

Before the idolatrous nations of Syria and Palestine undertook a warlike expedition, or entered into battle, they endeavoured to bring down a curse upon their enemies, which should inevitably secure their overthrow. Influenced by an opinion, which long prevailed in those parts of the world, that some men had a power, by the help of their gods, to devote not only particular persons, but even whole armies to destruction, Ealak sent for Balaam to curse Israel, before he would ven-ture to attack their camp. This was done someture to attack their camp. This was done some-times by words of imprecation, of which there was a set form among some people, which Eschines calls the determinate curse. Besides this, they sometimes offered sacrifices, and used certain rites and ceremonies with solemn charms. Some of the charms used by the heathen on such occasions, are mentioned in the life of Crassus from the pen of Plutarch. The historian states that Atticus, a tribune of the people, made a fire at the gate, out of which the general was to march against the Parthians, into which he threw certain things to make a fume, and offered sacrifice to the most angry gods, with horrid imprecations. These, he says, according to ancient traditions, had such a power that no man who was loaded with them could avoid being undone. Under the influence probably of the same opinion, the renowned champion of the Philistines, sure of the favour and protection of his deities, and, consequently, persuaded that his enemies must necessarily be the objects of their displeasure and vengeance, cursed David by his gods, devoting him to utter destruction .- Paxton.

When they came to him, and delivered and afterwards evaued compliance with their message from the king, he desired them to tarry with him that night, for he could give them no answer till he had consulted the Lord.

But that omniscient Being, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, could not be ignorant of Balaam's base motive; in order therefore to try in what manner he would endeavour to palliate the same, asked him, 'What men they were that were with him?' 'They are some,' said he, whom the king of Moab hath sent to me, to let me know, that there is a people come out of Egypt, which cover the face of the earth; and to desire me to come to him, and curse them, in hopes that he then may be able to overcome them, and drive them away.' But God said to him, Thou shalt not go with them, nor curse that people, for they are blessed.'

Balaam, not daring to disobey the command of the Lord, got up in the morning, and, dismissing the messengers, said, Be gone to your own country; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.' They returned to the king, but misreported Balaam's answer; for instead of telling him that God had refused to let him come, they told him that Balaam refused to come. Whereupon Balak, falsely suggesting to himself, that either the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition, or the value of the presents his covetousness, resolved to gratify both; and therefore he immediately despatched away messengers of more honourable rank, and with larger proposals. 'Let nothing,' said he, 'hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great honour, and give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask, if thou wilt come and curse this people.'

Such was the prevalence of Balaam's avarice, that though he had been so solemnly prohibited from going and cursing the people whom God had blessed; he accepted of these presents of their enemies, their request, by assuring them he durst not, on any account, counteract the divine will, but to amuse them, desired they would tarry a little while he inquired farther of the Lord.

This was tempting God; who therefore in displeasure left him to his own will.* He had positively at first told him his mind, and it was the highest disobedience and presumption to pretend or offer at the reversion of it, by a farther application. However, blinded with covetousness and pride, he again addressed himself to God; who, provoked at his obstinacy, leaves him to himself, and tells him. 'If the men come to call thee, rise and go with them; + but what I shall say to thee, that only shalt thou do.'

Notwithstanding this permission to go, God was resolved to make Balaam sensible of his displeasure. Upon this concession he got up in the morning, and went with the princes of Moab. But as he was on the road, the angel of the Lord stood on the way with a drawn sword in his hand,

A regard to the divine omnipresence was almost banished in the mind of Balaam, by the longing desire after the reward of his impiety; but it pleased God to give the ass,‡ on which Balaam

* From hence we may observe how unfit we are to choose for ourselves; especially in opposition to God's immediate commands and instructions.

+ This, by the consent of interpreters, is looked upon, not as a command but a permission; and seems ironically spoken; as if God had said, 'Since thou art so eager to go, thou knowest it is against my mind, take thy own course; go if thou wilt. But yet thou shalt not gain thy end; thou shalt go with this restriction on thy will, thou shalt say nothing but what I shall direct thee.'

‡ The common breed of asses in the East is larger than that usually seen in Britain; and another, still larger, is preserved for the saddle: for the ordinary people, and many of the middle class commonly ride asses. Asses are often preferred to horses by the Sheiks, or religious men; and though most of the opulent merchants keep horses, they are not ashamed, especially when old, to appear mounted on asses. Those intended for the saddle, of the best sort, bear a high price; they are tall, delicately limbed, go swiftly in an easy pace or gallop, and are very sure-footed, They are fed and dressed with the same care as horses.

both saw the angel and shunned him, by turning out of the road into the field. Balaam for this beat the ass, and struggling to put the beast into the way, the angel stood in another narrow way between two walls, which inclosed some vineyards. The ass seeing the angel, clung up to the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot. This so incensed him, that he beat her again. But when the angel went farther, and stood in a narrow place, where the ass could not turn, she fell down under him. For this Balaam was in a greater passion than before, beating her with his staff.

But God, to rebuke the wilfulness of the prophet, miraculously opened the mouth of the ass,* and she said to him,

The bridle is ornamented with fringe and cowries, or small shells; and the saddle, which is broad and easy, is covered with a fine carpet .- Dr Russel.

* If the ass had opened her own mouth, and reproved the rash prophet, we might well be as-tonished. Maimonides and others have imagined that the matter was transacted in a vision. But it is evident, from the whole tenor of the narration, as well as from the declaration of an inspired writer (2 Pet. ii. 14-16.) that it is to be understood as a literal narrative of a real transaction. The ass, it has been observed, was enabled to utter such and such sounds, probably as parrots do, without understanding them: and, whatever may be said of the construction of the ass's mouth, and of the tongue and jaws being so formed as to be untit for speaking, yet an adequate cause is assigned for this wonderful effect; for it is expressly said, that 'the Lord opened the mouth of the ass. The miracle was by no means needless or superfluous: it was very proper to convince Balaam, that the mouth and tongue were under God's direction, and that the same divine power, which caused the dumb ass to speak contrary to its na-ture, could make him in like manner utter bless-ings contrary to his inclination. The fact is as consonant to reason as any other extraordinary operation; for all miracles are alike, and equally demand our assent, if properly attested. The giving of articulation to a brute is no more to the Deity, than the making of the blind to see, or the deaf to hear. And the reputed baseness of the instrument, of which God was pleased to make use, amounts merely to this, that (as the apostle observes on another occasion,) 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise,' 1 Cor. i. 27. There was, therefore, a fitness in the instrument used: for, the more vile the means were, the fitter they were to confound the unrighteous prophet.-Horne.

rode, such quickness of sight, that she | What have I done to thee, that thou shouldest beat me these three times.' 'Because,' said he, 'thou hast deserved it, in mocking me: had I a sword in my hand I would kill thee.' The ass replied, 'Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast been used to ride ever since I was thine; did I ever serve thee so before?" He answered, 'No.' Such an incident might have alarmed a mind less prepossessed than that of Balaam, which remained blinded, till God himself opened his eyes, and let him see the angel standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; at the sight of which, he bowed himself down, and fell on his face. The angel expostulated with him, and told him his undertaking was perverse, in attempting to go against the express command of God, and that therefore he was come to stop him: and, but for his ass, which he had so barbarously abused, he had slain him.

> Balaam, self-convicted, acknowledged his crime, and offered to return home again, if so be his journey was displeasing to God. However, the Lord resolved out of this man's wicked inclination to raise some advantage; and therefore, since he was gone so far, he would not send him back, but make him, who was hired to curse, be the instrument of pronouncing a blessing on his people.

Having thus chastised Balaam on the way, he suffered him to go on; but with this charge, that he should only speak what God should tell him.

Balaam then went on his journey with the princes of Moab; and when Balak understood that Balaam was coming, that he might the more oblige him by personal civilities, he came out to meet him (himself receiving him upon the confines of his dominion.) At their meeting, the king in a friendly manner blamed Balaam for refusing to come to him upon his first: sending, since it was in his power to advance him. But Balaam, to excuse himself, let him know what restraint the great men that day, the next day he Baal, * that from thence he might take a view of the camp of Israel.

rected the king to order seven altars + to be erected for him: and seven oxen, with seven rams, to be prepared; which being done, they both together offered an ox and a ram upon each altar. Then leaving Balak to stand by his burnt-offering, Balaam withdrew to consult the Lord, who met and instructed him what to say; and returning to Balak, whom he found stand-

* The word Baal signifies Lord, and was the name of several gods, both male and female, as Selden shows. The god of the Moabites was Chemosh, but here very probably is called by the common name of Baal: and, as all nations worshipped their gods upon high places, so this god of Moab, having more places of worship than one, Balak carried Balaam to them all, that from thence he might take the most advantageous prospect of the Israelites. These high places were full of trees, and shady groves, which made them com-modious both for the solemn thoughts and prayers of such as were devout, and for the filthy inclinations and abominable practices of such as affected to be wicked .- Patrick's Commentary.

+ According to the account which both Festus and Servius give us of ancient times, the heathens sacrificed to the celestial gods only upon altars: to the terrestrial, they sacrificed upon the earth; and to the infernal, in holes digged in the earth. And though the number seven was much observed among the Hebrews, even by God's own appointment, Lev. iv. 6. yet we do not read of more than one altar built by the patriarchs, when they offered their sacrifices, nor were any more than one allowed by Moses: and therefore we may well suppose, that there was something of heathen superstition in this erection of seven altars, and that the Moabites, in their worship of the sun, (who is here principally meant by Baal) did at the same time sacrifice to the seven planets. This was originally a part of the Egyptian theology; for as they worshipped at this time the lights of heaven, so they first imagined the seven days of the week to be under the respective influence of these se-ven luminaries. Belus, and his Egyptian priests, having obtained leave to settle in Babylon, about half a century before this time, might teach the Chaldeans their astronomy, and so introduced this Egyptian notion of the influence of the seven ruling stars, which Balaam, being no stranger to the learning of the age and country he lived in, might pretend to Balak to proceed upon in his divinations and auguries-Le Clerc and Shuckford.

Lord had laid upon him. Then enter-ing at the altar, and the princes of Moab taining him publicly with his princes and with him, he thus addressed himself to them: 'Thou hast caused me, O king, tobrought him up into the high places of come from Aram, to out of the mountains of the east to curse the family of Jacob, and bid defiance to Israel. But how shall Whilst they were here, the prophet di- I curse those whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy those whom the Lord hath not defied? From the top of the rocks I see their protector, and from the hills I behold him. Behold, this people shall be separated to God, and distinguished from all other people in religion, laws, and course of life; they shall not be reckoned among the nations.' Then setting forth the prosperity and increase of Israel, lie wished that his lot might be with them in life and death.

[BOOR II]

Balak, as much alarmed as incensed at the prophecy of Balaam, so contrary to his expectation, passionately inquired,— What hast thou done? I sent for thee to curse mine enemies, and thou hast blessed them." Balaam excused himself by the necessity of his instructions, from which at this time it was not in his power to deviate.

However, as Balak was not discouraged; from the change of the place he hoped a change of fortune or better success; and therefore taking Balaam into the field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah, he tried whether he could curse from thence.

Balaam, who was willing to please him, had seven altars there, and a bullock and a ram offered on each. Then withdrawing again, as before, to consult the Lord, he received fresh instructions. Balak now began to understand the interview between the Lord and Balaam; and upon his return to him and his attendants, who were big with expectation of the result, demanded what the Lord had spoken? Upon which Balaam, to bespeak the greater attention and regard to what he should say, began thus: 'Consider, O Balak, thou

I The same as Mesopotamia, which the Hebrews call Aram-naharaim.

son of Zippor, consider that God, who | can prevail against Jacob nor any divinahath already blessed Israel, and forbidden me to curse them, is not like a man, that he should renounce his promise, or repent of what he does. Hath he promised, and shall he not perform? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commission to bless, and he hath blessed, and I: cannot reverse it. He does not approve of afflictions or outrages against the posterity of Jacob, nor of vexation or trouble against the posterity of Israel.* The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king + is in him. God hath brought him out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of a unicorn to Surely no enchantment

tion against Israel. So that considering what God shall work this time for the deliverance of his people, all the world shall wonder and say, what hath God wrought! Who hath put his people out of the reach of fraud or force, and turned the intended curse into a blessing. And to show their future strength and success, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up themselves as a young lion: they shall not lie down until they eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain.' &

* The text should be rendered as above: 'He does not approve of afflictions or outrages against the posterity of Jacob, nor vexation or trouble against the posterity of Israel.' This is very agreeable to all that Balaam said and did on this occasion, and stops the mouths of libertines and

+ So Jerome, Arius Montanus, Tremellius, and Junius turn it. That is, the triumph of a king victorious over his enemies.

I This animal, generally supposed to be the rhinoceros, is frequently used to express extraordinary strength. The principal reason for translating the word reem, unicorn, and not rhinoceros, is from a prejudice that he must have but one horn: But this is by no means so well founded, as to be admitted as the only argument for establishing the existence of an animal which never has appeared after the search of so many ages. Scripture speaks of the horns of the unicorn; so that, even from this circumstance, the reem may be the rhinoceros, as the Asiatic and part of the African rhinoceros may be the unicorn. Next to the elephant, the rhinoceros is said to be the most powerful of animals. It is usually found twelve feet long, from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail; from six to seven feet high; and the circumference of its body is nearly equal to its length. It is, therefore, equal to the elephant in bulk; and the reason of its appearing so much smaller to the eye than that animal is, that its legs are so much shorter. Words, says Goldsmith, can convey but a very confused idea of this animal's shape; and yet there are few so remarkably formed. But for its horn, which has been found to measure between thirty and forty inches in length, its head would have the appearance of that part of a hog. The skin of the rhinoceros is naked, rough, knotty, and lying upon the body in folds, in a very peculiar manner; the skin, which is of a dirty brown colour, is so thick as to turn the edge of a scimitar, and to resist a musket-ball. Such is the general outline of an animal that appears chiefly

formidable from the horn growing from its snout; and formed rather for war, than with a propensity to engage. The elephant, the boar, and the buffalo, are obliged to strike transversely with their weapons; but the rhinoceros, from the situation of his horn, employs all his force with every blow; so that the tiger will more willingly attack any other animal of the forest, than one whose strength is so justly employed. Indeed, there is no force which this terrible animal has to apprehend ! defended on every side by a thick horny hide, which the claws of the lion or the tiger are unable to pierce, and armed before with a weapon that even the elephant does not choose to oppose. Travellers have assured us, that the elephant is often found dead in the forests, pierced with the horn of a rhinoceros. In addition to these particulars, Mr Bruce informs us, that the rhinoceros does not eat hay or grass, but lives entirely upon trees; he does not spare the most thorny ones, but rather seems to be fond of them; and it is not a small branch that can escape his hunger, for he has the strongest jaws of any creature known to him, and best adapted to grinding or bruising any thing that makes resistance. But, besides the trees capable of most resistance, there are in the vast forests which he inhabits trees of a softer consistence, and of a very succulent quality, which seem to be destined for his principal food. For the purpose of gaining the highest branches of these, his upper lip is capable of being lengthened out, so as to increase his power of laying hold with this, in the same manner as the elephant does with his trunk. With this lip, and the assistance of his tongue he pulls down the upper branches, which have most leaves, and these he devours first; having stripped the tree of its branches, he does not therefore abandon it, but placing his snout as low in the trunk as he finds his horn will enter, he rips up the body of the tree, and reduces it to thin pieces, like so many laths; and when he has thus prepared it, he embraces as much of it as he can in his monstrous jaws, and twists it with as much ease as an ox would do a root of celery.

of These passages are a manifest prophecy of the victories which the Israelites should gain over their enemies, and particularly the Canaanites; and of their secure possession and quiet enjoyment of Balak was so incensed at this peremptory prophecy of the immediate interposition of providence in favour of God's chosen people, that he forbid Balaam to exercise his prophetic talent; though soon after his eagerness to have Israel cursed made him change his mind; for he called for Balaam, and entreated him to try another place, in hopes God would permit him to curse Israel. Hereupon Balaam followed Balak to the top of Mount Peor,* a hill that looked towards the wilderness.

Whatsoever ground Balak might have for his hopes, it is certain Balaam knew the positive will of God in this case was to bless and not to curse; and this he had declared to be irreversible, when he told Balak God was not like fickle man. Yet stimulated with the blind desire of reward, he consented to Balak to tempt the Lord afresh; for he there erected seven altars and laid seven sacrifices thereon.

Eut having in vain tried all his arts of divination, and seeing that God was resolved to continue blessing Israel (without withdrawing, as before, under pretence to consult the Lord) looking on the camp of Israel, the Spirit of the Lord+came upon him, and he cried out in an ecstasy, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!' Then by significant metaphors, he foretold the extent, fertility, and strength of Israel; and those that blessed them should be

Balak was so incensed at this peremp- | blessed, and those that cursed them should tory prophecy of the immediate interposi- | be cursed.

Balak now upbraided Balaam with deceit and falsehood, and smiting his hands together, being no longer able to restrain his rage, bid him haste and be gone; 'For I thought,' said he, 'to have promoted thee to great honour, if thou hadst answered my design in cursing Israel, but the Lord hath hindered thy preferment.'

Balaam had recourse to his old excuse, that he could not exceed the commands of the Lord, but must speak what he put in his mouth. And though he was willing to gratify the king of Moab in some sort, and perhaps (considering his covetous temper) to entitle himself to some reward, he offered to advertise them now at parting, what the Israelites should do to his people in the latter days. But still, against his own inclination, he bestowed blessings on Israel, and prophesied, a star should come forth from Jacob, and a rod from Israel; that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the children of Sheth;;

the land afterwards, particularly in the reigns of David and Solomon. It is remarkable that God bath here put into the mouth of Balaam much the same thin a which Jacob had before predicted of Judah, Gen. xlix. 9. Such is the analogy and harmony between the prophecies of scripture.— Bishop Newton.

^{*} Probably the place where the famous Baalpeor had his chief temple. He was a deity of the Moabites and Midianites, supposed to be the same as the Priapus of the Romans, and worshipped with similar obscene-rites.

[†] In Num. xxiii. it is observable, that while Balaam used his art of divination or enchantment, he had only a word put into his mouth; but now having laid aside his enchantments, the Spirit of God came upon hum.

[‡] This prophecy was exactly fulfilled in the person and actions of David: but most Jewish as well as Christian writers apply it, primarily perhaps to David, but ultimately to the Messiah, as the person chiefly intended, in whom it was to receive its full and entire completion. Onkelos, the most ancient and valuable of the Chaldee para-phrasts, interprets it of the Messiah: "When a prince," says he, "shall arise of the house of Jacob, and Curist shall be anointed of the house of Israel, he shall both slay the princes of Moab, and rule over all the sons of men:" and with him agree the other Targums or paraphrases. Maimonides, one of the most learned and famous of the Jewish doctors, understands it partly of David, and partly of the Messiah; and with him agree other rabbies, cited by the critics and commentators to this purpose. It appears to have been generally understood by the Jews as a prophecy of the Messiah, because the false Christ, who appeared in the reign of the Roman Emperor Adrian, assumed the title of Barchochebas, or 'the son of the star,' in allusion to this prophecy, and in order to have it believed that he was the star whom Balaam had seen afar off. The Christian fathers are unanimous in applying this prophecy to our Saviour, and to the star which appeared at his nativity. Origen in particular saith, that in the law there are many typical and enigmatical references to the Messiah: but he produces this as one of the plainest and clearest of proplecies. And both Origen and Eusebins affirm, that it was in consequence of

that Edom should fall under its power; and that the Amalekites and Kenites should be extirpated. In fine, he fore-told, that the western nations, the Greeks and Romans, should vanquish the Assyrians, destroy the Hebrews, and perish themselves.

But the monstrous wickedness of this man is further apparent; for after these predictions, as if vexed at his own disappointment in missing the reward he expected, and to be revenged on the Israelites as the occasion of it, he instructed the Moabites and Midianites in a wicked artifice; which was to send their daughters to the camp of the Israelites, to draw those people into idolatry; the sure method to deprive them of the assistance of God, who protected them. This artifice succeeded; for the next account we have of the Israelites is, that they lay encamped at Shittim; where many of them were deluded by the Moabitish and Midianitish women, and were drawn in, not only to commit whoredom with them, but to assist at their sacrifices, and worship their gods, even Baal-peor. *

Balaam's prophecies, which were known and believed in the East, that the Magi, upon the appearance of a new star, came to Jerusalem to worship Him who was born king of the Jews. The stream of modern divines and commentators runs the same way: that is, they apply the prophecy principally to our Saviour, and by Moab and Edom understand the enemies and persecutors of the church. In favour of this opinion it must be acknowledged, that many prophecies of scripture have a double meaning, literal and mystical; respect two events; and receive a twofold completion. David too was in several things a type and figure of the Messiah. If by 'destroying all the ngure of the Messian. If by destroying all the children of Sheth' be meant 'ruling over all mankind,' this was never fulfilled in David. A star did really appear at our Saviour's nativity; and in scripture He is styled 'the day star,' 2 Pet. i, 19; 'the morning star,' Rev. ii. 28; 'the bright and morning star,' xxii. 16; perhaps in alllusion to this very prophecy. Upon the whole, it is probable that the Messiah was remotely intended; but that the primary and literal meaning of the prophecy respects the person and actions of David: particularly for this reason, because Balaam is here advertising Balak, 'what this people should do to his people in the latter days;' that is, what the Israelites should do to the Moabites hereafter .- Bishop Newton.

* The Jewish doctors tell us, that on a great

But God, who hated sin in his chosen people, suffered not their iniquity to go unpunished; for he showed terrible resentment against both their atrocious crimes, commanding Moses to take the chiefs of those that had joined themselves to Baal-peor, and hang them up before the Lord in the sight of all the people.

Moses accordingly gave charge to the judges† of Israel to see execution done, every one on the men under his charge, that sacrificed to Baal-peor. But the divine justice did not stop here. Their whoredom must be punished as well as their idolatry; which was aggravated vastly by a person of considerable rank and dignity.

Bold Zimri, the son of Salu, prince of a chief house among the Simeonites, took Cozbi, the daughter of Zur, who was also a prince of a chief house in Midian, and daringly brought her to the Israelitish camp, in contempt of Moses, and in sight of the congregation, who, because of the late execution done upon their princes, stood weeping before the door of the tabernacle; and leading her openly into his tent, there lay with her.

This superlative impudence and open violation of God's law, none offered to re-

festival, which the Moabites made in honour of their god Baal-peor, some Israelites, who happened to be there, casting their eyes upon their young women, were smitten with their beauty, and court-ed their enjoyment; but that the women would not yield to their motion, upon any other condition than that they would worship their gods. Whereupon, pulling a little image of Peor out of their bosom, they presented it to the Israelites to kiss, and then desired them to eat of the sacrifices. which had been offered to him. But Josephus tells the story otherwise, namely, that the women, upon some pretence or other, came into the Israelitish camp; and when they had enamoured the young Hebrews, according to their instructions, they made a pretence as though they must be gone; but upon passionate entreaties, accompanied with vows and oaths on the other side, the subtle enchantresses consented to stay with them, and grant them every thing that they desired, upon condition that they would embrace their religion.

—Patrick's Commentary. and Josephus.

+ Probably these were the judges whom, by the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, with God's ap-

probation, he had set over the people.

sent, but Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, who, rising up from the congregation, and filled with a divine zeal, took a javelin in his hand, and followed them to the tent; where, in the very act of whoredom, he thrust them both through.*

This zealous act of Phinehas put a stop to the plague, which God sent among the people for this audacious act of Zimri's, and the other lewdnesses and impieties of his comrades. However, there died on this occasion no less than four and twenty thousand.† Phinehas's holy zeal for God's honour gained him not only high commendation, but a perpetual settlement of the priesthood on himself and his posterity.

CHAPTER X.

The Israelites overcome the Midianites without sustaining the least loss.—They are numbered, and the different tribes put in possession of their respective departments.—Moses, apprised of his death, assembles the people, and having enumerated the peculiar blessings of the Almighty, and enjoined on them future obedience,

* Phinehas was inspired undoubtedly by the Spirit of the God of justice to do this act, which can never be a precedent on any common occasion. An act something similar occurs in our own history. In 1381, in the minority of Richard II., a most formidable insurrection took place in Kent and Essex, about 100,000 men, chiefly under the direction of Wat Tyler, seized on London, massacred multitudes of innocent people, and were proceeding to the greatest enormities, when the king requiring a conference in Smithfield with the rebel leader, Sir William Walworth, then mayor of London, provoked at the insolence with which Tyler behaved to his sovereign, knocked him off his horse with his mace, after which he was instantly despatched. While his partisans were bending their bows to revenge the death of their leader, Richard, then only sixteen years of age, rode up to them, and with great courage and presence of mind thus addressed them: "What, my people, will you kill your king? be not concerned for the death of your leader; follow me, and I will be your general." They were suddenly appeased, and the rebellion terminated. The action of Sir William Walworth was that of a zealot, of essential benefit at the time, and justified only by the pressing exigencies of the case.—A. Clarke.

by the pressing exigencies of the case.—A. Clarke.

† In this number, it is probable, Moses includes the thousand princes that were hanged.

Which computation reconciles this place to that of the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 8. where he mentions but three and twenty thousand, without the thousand

princes that were hanged.

recited to them a song, composed at the immediate direction of God.—Appoints Joshua his successor and dies.

THESE disorders thus quieted, and the offenders punished, the next thing was to take vengeance of the Midianites, tho had debauched the Israelites with their idolatry and whoredoms. In order to this, Moses commanded a detachment of twelve thousand select men, a thousand out of every tribe, to go against the Midianites; among whom went the zealous Phinehas, who carried with him the holy instruments, or trumpets, to animate the people.

Such was the exertion of the divine power in behalf of the Israelites, that though very inferior in number, they slew five kings, and all their men; among whom was the wicked prophet Balaam, who, though he had before escaped the angel's sword, yet now fell a sacrifice to the injured people of God.

They burned all the cities and castles, took all the women and children prisoners, and seized on their cattle, flocks, and goods. After which, loaded with the spoils of their enemies, they returned in triumph to the Israelitish camp.

In the way home they were met by Moses, Eleazar the high priest, and all the princes; who congratulated their success. But Moses seeing the Midianitish women among the captives, was much offended at the officers of the army for saving them; 'for these,' said he, 'by the counsel of Balaam, caused the Israelites to sin against the Lord in the business of Peor, and provoked him to send a plague upon the congregation of Israel.' And thereupon he commanded them to kill every male among the children, and every

[†] They inhabited the country on the East towards the Red sea.

N By this it seems he was not got home; and it may be with reason conjectured, that he was devising much the same mischief against the Hebrews whilst he was among the Midianites, as when he was among the Moabites; and therefore he justly fell by the sword of Israel.

save none alive but the virgin females.

After this they were to abide seven days without the camp, and both soldiers and spoils pass through the ceremonies of a legal purification: which when they had performed, God directed Moses to take an account of the whole prev; and dividing it into two legual parts, ito give one to the soldiers who had taken it, and the other part among the rest of the people that stayed at home. "Out of the soldiers' part he levied the five hundredth part, both of persons and beasts, which he paid as a tribute to Eleazar the priest, for a heave-offering to the Lord; and out of the other part, which the people had, one part out of fifty of both persons and beasts, was given to the Levites.

The officers of the army, out of the other parts of the booty which they had taken, as jewels of gold, bracelets, rings, earrings and tablets, brought their expiatory offering * to atone for their transgressions in saving the Midianitish women, and their gratulatory offering of thanksgiving for so great a victory; the greatness of which may be guessed from the number of their prisoners and cattle; the virgin females were two and thirty thousand; all the rest of the people, men, women, and children, were put to the sword.

The plunder in cattle and flocks consisted of six hundred seventy and five

* After the rich and various spoils of Midian were divided, the officers of the army, penetrated with gratitude that they had not lost a man in the contest, 'presented an oblation to the Lord,'-the gold of which amounted to 16,750 shekels, equal to £37,869 16s. 5d. sterling. To this splendid example of devout acknowledgment to the God of battles may be traced the origin of the same custom observed by other nations. The Greeks, be-fore the spoils were distributed, considered themselves obliged to dedicate a part of them to the gods to whose assistance they reckoned themselves indebted for them all. They had several methods of doing this; at one time they collected them into a heap, and consumed them with fire; at another they suspended their offerings in the temples. Pausanias, the Spartan, is reported to have consecrated out of the Persian spoils, a tri-pod to Delphian Apollo, and a statue of brass, seven cubits long, to Olympian Jupiter,-Paxton.

woman that had lain with man; and to thousand sheep, seventy and two thousand beeves, and sixty-one thousand asses; besides rich goods and ornaments; and to make this still more great and miraculous, the victory was gained without the loss of one man on Israel's side, as appears from the report the officers made upon a muster.

The Israelites thus taking possession of the country on this side Jordan, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, observing it to be a fertile soil, and good pasturage, desired of Moses that they might settle in that country, upon condition that they should march with the other tribes to conquer the land where they were to settle; that they would not return till the others were in possession; and that they would claim no part of the lands that were beyond Jordan.

Moses, at first, thought they intended to venture no farther, but had a mind to sit down in a country ready gained, and leave their brethren, the rest of the tribes. Upon which he blamed them for offering such a proposal to discourage the rest of the Israelites; but when he understood their real design, upon condition they performed their promise, he granted their request.

Moses then enumerated the several stations and removes which the children of Israel made from Rameses in Egypt, to the river Jordan in Canaan, and described the bounds of the promised land, and gave the names of the persons appointed to divide it among the tribes of Israel.

Orders were afterwards given, that the children of Israel should assign to the Levites eight and forty cities, with suburbs to them, in which the Levites might live among the tribes, and of which number, six were appointed to be cities of refuge + for the manslayer to fly to,

[†] These cities were of easy access, situated in mountains or large plains. That nothing might retard the manslayer in his flight to them, the roads, to the width of 58 feet 4 inches, were kept in good repair, and the rivers of note had bridges

But provision was made that he, who should be duly convicted of wilful mur-

thrown over them; where any other way crossed or parted from them, posts, marked with REFUGE, directed to the city of refuge. On the 15th day of the 12th month, at the end of the winter, the roads were inspected by the magistrates, and re-pairs were ordered. These cities were plentifully stored with necessary provisions: but no weapons of war were made or sold therein. When a Hebrew, or a stranger among them, unwittingly kill-ed his neighbour, he fled with all possible expedition to the city of refuge that was next to him; for if any of the friends of the killed person could overtake him before he got thither, they were warranted to slay him. Whenever the manslayer entered the city, he used to send some prudent and moderate persons to meet the pursuing avenger of blood, to soften his rage. When he came up, he presented an accusation to the judges of the place, upon the footing of which the manslayer was cited to their bar. If upon trial it appeared he had slain his neighbour unwittingly, he was received as a lodger into the city. Only, it is said, that the cause was again tried in the manslayer's own city; and if he was again found to have done it unwittingly, he was safely conducted back to the city of refuge, and abode there till the death of the high priest; but he was obliged to apply himself to some business, that he might not be chargeable to the inhabitants.- In Europe we do not discover that aistinguished wisdom in the institution of the cities of refuge, which there really is. With us murder or manslaughter is prosecuted so regularly, that we are apt to overlook the policy of this national appointment. It deserves notice, too, that the appropriation of certain cities for the purposes of refuge, seems peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation: we read nothing of it in Egypt; and there is at this time no trace of it in the East, notwithstanding the utility of such appointments might deservedly have preserved the custom among those who had once known it. Travellers inform us, that such is the irritable and vindictive spirit of the Arabs and other inhabitants of hot climates, that if one Sheik should seriously say to another, 'Thy bonnet is dirty,' or 'the wrong side of thy turban is out,' nothing but blood can wash away the reproach; and not merely the blood of the offender, but that also of all the males of his family! Volney informs us that the interest of the common safety has, for ages, established a law among the Arabians, which decrees that the blood of every man, who is slain, must be avenged by that of his This vengeance is called tar, or retaliation; and the right of exacting it devolves on the nearest of kin to the deceased. So nice are the Arabs on this point of honour, that, if any one neglects to seek his retaliation, he is disgraced for ever. He therefore watches every opportunity of revenge: if his enemy perishes from any other cause, still be is not satisfied, and his vengeance is directed against the nearest relation. These is directed against the nearest relation. animosities are transmitted, as an inheritance,

who had happened to kill a man by der, should be put to death; and in capital cases it was provided, that none should be convicted of such crimes by the evidence of one single man.

There was a law likewise made, that every daughter, who should possess an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, should be married to one of the tribes of her father, that so the children of Israel might enjoy every one the inheritance of his father; and the inheritance not to be transferred to another tribe. This was grounded upon a law made before, which empowered daughters to inherit land, where the heirs male should be deficient; and was the case of Zelophehad's daughters, who, upon obtaining this act, were required to marry within the family of their own father's tribe.*

from father to children, and never cease but by the extinction of one of the families, unless they agree to sacrifice the criminal, or purchase the blood for a stated price, in money or in flocks. Without this satisfaction there is neither peace, nor truce, nor alliance between them; nor, sometimes, even between whole tribes. 'There is blood between us,' say they on every occasion; and this expression is an insurmountable barrier. Among the Circassians all the relatives of the murderers are considered as guilty. This customary infatuation to avenge the blood of relations, generates most of the fends, and occasions great bloodshed among all the tribes of Caucasus; for, unless pardon be purchased, or obtained by intermarriage between the two families, the principle of revenge is propagated to all succeeding generations. If the thirst of vengeauce is quenched by a price paid to the family of the deceased, this tribute is called 'the price of blood;' but neither princes nor usdens (or nobles) accept of such a compensation, as it is an established law among them to demand blood for blood. Dr Henderson, in describing the operation of the oriental law, of blood for blood among the Ingush Tartars, mentions the case of "a young man of amiable disposition, who was worn down almost to a skeleton, by the constant dread in which he lived, of having avenged upon him a murder committed by his father before he was born. He can reckon up more than a hundred persons who consider themselves bound to take away his life, whenever a favourable op-portunity shall present itself."—Brown, Calmet, and Horne.

* The original division of land was to the several tribes according to their families; so that each tribe was settled in the same county, and each family in the same barony or hundred. Nor was the estate of any family in one tribe permitted to pass into another, even by the marriage of an heiress. So

By this time the forty years' travel of the Israelites were near expired. Moses therefore considering, that the present generation of the Israelites, now ready to pass over Jordan to take possession of the promised land, were either sprung up since the law was given at Mount Sinai, near forty years before, or too young to remember and understand the law then given, thought fit to repeat the law to

A little before his death, therefore, he assembled the people of Israel, on the first day of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt (the people being yet in the plains of Moab by Jordan, and near Jericho,) he repeated to them briefly all that had befallen their fathers since they left Egypt, the gracious dealings of God with them, their unruliness, disobedience, and rebellions, which had so often provoked the Lord to punish them, and by which means they brought upon them that grievous sentence, 'That they should not enter into that good land.'

This account he often repeated, that they might take warning by the miscarriages of their forefathers.

Then he repeated the decalogue, and divers other laws and precepts, formerly given, though not without some variation, with the addition of some new laws on divers subjects, and some explanations of the old; exhorting them to a strict observation of them, promising that they should soon enter the land of Canaan, and also commanded them to destroy all

that, not only was the original balance of property preserved, but the closest and dearest connections of affinity attached to each other the inhabitants of every vicinage. Thus domestic virtue and affection had a more extensive sphere of action: the happiness of rural life was increased, and a general attention to virtue and decorum was promoted, from that natural emulation, which each family would feel to preserve unsullied the reputation of their neighbourhood: and the poor might every where expect more ready assistance, since they implored it from men whose sympathy in their sufferings would be quickened by hereditary friendship, and hereditary connexion.—Dr Graves.

By this time the forty years' travel of the idols of the inhabitants of the country, e Israelites were near expired. Moses and to extirpate the people.*

He encouraged them to be faithful unta God, assuring them, if they kept his com-

* The Canaanites were unquestionably a most depraved and idolatrous race; and to have suffered them to remain and coalesce with the Israelites, would have been to sanction idolatry by encouraging their union with idolatrous nations. It must be admitted that God has a right to punish wicked nations by the infliction of judgments, such as pestilence, or famine, or by employing the sword of enemies; because we see that he actually does so in the course of his providence; and we cannot see what essential difference there is between this and his giving a command to the Israelites to destroy the wicked Canaanites; for it is a notorious fact, that these latter were an abominably wicked people. Bishop Watson remarks, "It is needless to enter into any proof of the depraved state of their , morals; they were a wicked people in the time of Abraham; and even then were devoted to destruction by God; but their iniquity was not then full, that is, they were not yet arrived to such a height of profligacy and impiety as required their destruction. In the time of Moses, they were idolaters; sacrificers of their own crying and smiling infants; devourers of human flesh; addicted to unnatural lusts; immersed in the filthiness of all manner of vice. Now, it will be impossible to prove, that it was a proceeding contrary to God's moral justice to exterminate so wicked a people. He made the Israelites the executors of his vengeance: and, in doing this, he gave such an evident and terrible proof of his abomination of vice, as could not fail to strike the surrounding nations with astonishment and terror, and to impress on the minds of the Israelites what they were to expect, if they followed the example of the nations whom he commanded them to cut off. 'Ye shall not commit any of these abominations, that the land spue not you out also, as it spued out the nations which were before you,' Lev. xviii. 28. How strong and descriptive this language! the vices of the inhabitants were so abominable, that the very land was sick of them, and forced to vomit them forth, as the stomach disgorges a deadly poison." After the time of God's forbearance was expired, they had still the alternative either to flee elsewhere, as, in fact, many of them did, or to surrender themselves, renounce their idolatries, and serve the God of Israel: in which case it appears that there was mercy for them. The destruction is not to be attributed to Israel wholly, even as instruments. The Lord himself, partly by storms and tempests, partly by noxious insects, and partly by injecting terror into the minds of the inhabitants, perhaps expelled and destroyed more than the Israelites themselves; the wonderful, and we may add the miraculous power of God, co-operating with them. Compare Exod. xxi.i. 27, 28, Josh. x. 11, &c. Doubtless God might have destroyed these nations by earthquake, fire, storm, or plague, and no man surely would have disputed his justice or authority. Then why should men dispute his equity in destroying them by the sword

with all manner of calamities, if they departed from them.

He renewed the covenant with the people in the name of the Lord; commanding them with a loud voice, to proclaim on the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal,* beyond Jordan, blessings to all

of war? Or, if we admit for a moment the existence of invisible spirits, he might have sent an angel to destroy them; and would it be unworthy of an angel to be the minister of his displeasure? Why, then, are Joshua and the Israelites to be abused on the same ground? The Almighty has, in fact, executed judgments on mankind far more severe than this. Though the inhabitants of Canaan are reckoned seven or eight nations, their whole country was much less than England, and what is this to the drowning of the world? a fact, attested by all ancient histories, divine and human, and confirmed by innumerable monuments. These considerations will sufficiently justify Joshua and the other Hebrew worthies, who engaged in this war in obedience to the divine command: and unless we admit them in a great degree, we know not how any war at all can be justified, however necessary. If many of the people engaged in it from baser motives, we are not required to answer for their conduct. There will always be bad char-acters in an army, and we do not reckon the Jews to be a nation of pure saints. But the fact is, that it nowhere appears (nor can it be proved,) that the Israelites in general contracted ferocious habits by this exterminating war. Few nations, if any, ever engaged less frequently, or in fewer offensive wars than Israel; and their agricultural habits, together with other circumstances, operated against such wars of ambition and conquest. If any individuals, or even the nation in some instances, did gratify a ferocious spirit, they proportionately violated their own laws, which enjoined love to neighbours, strangers, and enemies. The most remote shadow of proof cannot be adduced that Moses carried on war, under the pretext of reli-gion. He made no proselytes by the sword; and neither he nor any other person mentioned with approbation in scripture, made war on any nation beyond the borders of the promised land because

they were idolaters.—Horne.

* These two mountains are situate in the tribe of Ephraim, near Shechem, in the province of Samaria, and are so near to one another, that nothing but a valley of about two hundred paces wide parts them; so that the priests, standing and pronouncing the blessings and curses, that were to attend the doers or violaters of the law in a very loud and distinct manner, might well enough be heard by the people, that were seated on the sides of the two hills, especially if the priests were advanced upon pulpits, as Ezra afterwards was, Nehem. viii. 4, and had their pulpits placed at Nehem. viii. 4, and had their pulpits placed at proper distances. Patrick's and Calmets Com-hills between the two rivers Arnon and Jo.dan mentary.—"There is a kind of sublime horror," One part of these mountains was distinguished by

mandments, they should have blessings those who kept the covenant, and curses heaped upon them; and threatened them to those who broke it: and to erect an altar in the land of Canaan, on which they should write the terms and conditions of their covenant with God.

> These things, with rehearsals sometimes of their fathers', and their own prevarications, Moses not only delivered to the people by word of mouth, but wrote them in a book, which he gave into the custody and care of the Levites, with direction from the Lord, that they should put it into the side of the ark, to be kept there for a witness against Israel, if they should rebel.

> Besides this, Moses, by the immediate direction of God, composed a song, in which were at large described, by the many benefits and favours of God to his people, their ingratitude to, and forgetfulness of him; the punishments by which he corrected them, with threatening of greater judgments, if they persisted to provoke him by a repetition of their follies.

> This song Moses recited to the people, and gave order that they should learn it, and repeat it often; that when for their transgressing the law, many calamities and troubles should befall them, this song might be a witness for God against them.

> The time was just now approaching, and the people ready to pass over Jordan; but the Lord having before told Moses, that he should not conduct the people into the promised land, because of his error at the waters of Meribah, he bid him now get him up into the mountains of Abarim,+

says Jowett, "in the lofty, craggy, and barren aspect of these two mountains, which seem to face each other with an air of defiance; especially as they stand contrasted with the rich valley beneath, where the city [of Shechem or Napolose] appears, to be embedded on either side in green gardens and extensive olive grounds, rendered more verdant by the lengthened periods of shade which they enjoy from the mountains on each side. Of the two, Gerizim is not wholly without cultiva-

unto mount Nebo, in the land of Moab, over-against Jericho, and take a view of the land of Canaan, and then die there on that mount, as his brother Aaron had died on mount Hor.

Moses had before endeavoured to deprecate one part of his sentence, his not being permitted to enter into the promised tand, but in vain; he therefore humbly submitted to the Almighty's pleasure now, and took a solemn farewell of the people in a prophetic blessing, which he pronounced upon each tribe, as Jacob had done just before his death.

And having before, by God's command, appointed Joshua to be his successor, to conduct the people to the promised land, he laid his hands upon him, in such a solemn and public manner, as gave all the people to understand, that after Moses's death Joshua was to be their leader. Moses went up to the top of Pisgah, overagainst Jericho, from whence, as the Lord had promised him, he could take a full view of the countries round about.

Though this servant of God was very aged, being an hundred and twenty years old, and on the verge of the grave, yet he was in such good health and strength, that his eyes were neither dim, nor his natural force abated; therefore, whilst

the name of Nebo, as appears from Deut. xxxii. 49. and comparing this with Deut. xxxiv. 1. we shall find that Nebo and Pisgah were one and the same mountain, and that if there was any distinction between the names, it was probably this, that the top of the mountain was more peculiarly called Pisgah, because it comes from a root which signifies to elevate, or raise up, and so may very properly denote the top or summit of any mountain. Not far from Nebo was beth-peor, which was very probably so called from some deity of the same name, that was worshipped there. But of all these mountains it must be observed, that though they are said to be in the land of Moab, yet they really stood in the territories of Sihon, king of the Amorites, however they retained their old names, because once they belonged to the Moabites.—Stackhouse.

these lasted, he surveyed with pleasure the beauteous prospect.

He viewed Jericho; saw Lebanon's fair cliffs and lofty cedars; and then resigned his soul into the hands of seraphs, who waited to convey him to a happier Canaan than what he had just before surveyed.

The Lord, sensible that the Israelites were prone on the slightest temptation to idolatry, lest they, when they remembered the wonderful things Moses had performed for them, should pay any superstitious adoration to his remains after his death, paid the funeral honours to this great prophet himself;* and in a valley in the land of Moab, over-against Beth-peor, buried him so secretly, that no man ever knew where his sepulchre was.

Thus departed this life, Moses, a most eminent servant of God, and the great conductor of his chosen people, by whom he was lamented with great solemnity, weeping and mourning for him in the plains of Moab thirty days.+

The same God, that by the hands of his angels carried up the soul of Moses to his glory, doth also by the hand of his angels carry his body down into the valley of Mosb, to his sepulture. Those hands, which had received the law from Him, those eyes that had seen His presence, those lips that had conferred so often with Him, that face that did so shine with the beams of His glory, may not be neglected when the soul is gone: He, that took charge of his birth and preservation in the reeds, takes charge of his carriage out of the world: the care of God ceaseth not over His own, either in death, or after it.—Bp. Hall.

† Josephus, the celebrated historian, gives Moses the following character: "He exceeded all that ever went before him in wisdom, and made the best use of what he understood. His address, as a speaker, was admirable, especially in those speeches which were made in public. But at the same time he was so great a master of his own passions, that he seemed to have none, or knew them only by name, and by observing them in others. He was one of the greatest commanders. As a prophet, there was never his equal: for all his words were oracles. Nor was he less famous to posterity for his writings than he was to the age he lived in for his actions."

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK III.

FROM THE APPOINTMENT OF JOSHUA AS MOSES' SUCCESSOR TO THE ANOINTING OF SAUL.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

WE now enter on that portion of the Old Testament, which is commonly distinguish-For though the books of ed as historical. Moses contain a large proportion of history, and are the only authentic records existing of those primeval ages; and though several of the prophetical books are in part historical; yet these having been denominated "the law and the prophets," from the grand peculiarities of each, the books before us may properly be called historical, by way of distinction. From the death of Moses to that of Nehemiah, at least 1050 years intervened; indeed some genealogies in Nehemiah extend beyond that period: and of this succession of ages these books contain a connected and regular narrative, which is extremely interesting to the sober student, as well as edifying to every pious reader. If we except some Phenician fragments, filled with inconsistencies, and of doubtful authority; and a few traditions concerning the Egyptians and Assyrians, distorted by the most extravagant relations, and evidently replete with fables; there is scarcely any thing extant, which gives us the least information of what was transacted in any of the nations of the world,

during by far the greater part of this period. For it does not yet appear, that any dependence can be placed on those narratives from the eastern world, which have lately been brought into Europe, and have excited considerable attention; and which some have so highly extolled, as to insinuate, not only that they render questionable other ancient histories hitherto of approved authority, but that their testimony ought to have some weight even in opposition to the records of the Scripture. Yet it is notorious, that they are so disfigured by fable or allegory, as to be scarcely intelligible; and that they relate events of the most extravagant and incredible antiquity. Leaving these, however, till fuller investigation has shown what credit they deserve; it is obvious to remark, that Herodotus, who used to be called the father of history, is supposed to have been contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah, the latest writers of these scriptural records: and all that he collected, concerning times long preceding his own, is generally allowed to be of doubtful, authority, and blended with much that is altogether fabulous. Yet the history on which we are entering, though modern compared with that contained in the books of Moses, commences at least 1000 years

before the days of this father of history! And (except as sceptics choose to confound well attested public miracles, wrought by the Almighty God for the most important of all purposes, with the absurd and pernicious fables of pagan writers,) the whole narrative is exceedingly probable and rational, and accords with the known character and general conduct of mankind, in the various circumstances in which they are placed. It also agrees with the most sober traditions and detached fragments of antiquity; and serves to elucidate many obscure parts of profane history, and to decide many questions in respect of ancient chronology. It also coincides with the manners and customs of those eastern regions, in the remotest ages, as far as any accounts of them have come down to us.

The books, on which we now enter, do not contain a complete political history of Israel, but merely a connected account of the most material events, or of such as were most suited to convey important instruction: and because transactions, which in the general estimate of mankind are considered as comparatively little, frequently inculcate the most salutary lessons of heavenly wisdom; these are often very fully recorded, while the more splendid concerns of courts and camps are passed over in silence, or but cursorily noticed.*

CHAPTER I.

Joshua succeeds Moses in the conduct of the Israelites, and is formally installed into his office.—Is encouraged by the divine promise.

—Sends out spies to view the land of Jericho; they are concealed by Rahab, and afterwards return.—The Israelites pass the river Jordan.—Circumcision renewed.

JOSHUA after the death of Moses, who was under God the great conductor of the Israelites, succeeded to his office, and was installed into the same with the usual ceremonies. Having been immediately

under the direction of Moses near forty years, in which he had been eye-witness to many wonderful exertions of providence in behalf of God's chosen people, he appeared to have been peculiarly adapted to the very important work allotted him.

Being now ready to enter and take possession of the promised land, God, for Joshua's greater encouragement, strengthened his former commission, by giving him a more immediate and express command, as he had before done to his servant Moses, to lead the people over Jordan;† telling him, that every place, upon which the sole of their feet should tread, should be their own; and assuring him, that there should not any man be able to

+ The principal river which waters Palestine is the Jordan. Its true source is in two fountains at Paneas (a city better known by its subsequent name of Cæsarea Philippi), at the foot of Anti-Libanus; its apparent source flows from beneath a cave at the foot of a precipice, in the sides of which are several niches with Greek inscriptions. During several hours of its course, it continues to be a small and insignificant rivulet. It flows due south through the centre of the country, intersecting the lake Merom and the sea or lake of Galilee, and (it is said) without mingling with its waters; and it loses itself in the lake Asphaltites or the Dead sea, into which it rolls a considerable volume of deep water, with such rapidity as to prevent a strong, active, and expert swimmer from swimming across it. The course of the Jordan is about one hundred miles; its breadth and depth are various. Dr Shaw computed it to be about thirty yards broad, and three yards or nine feet in depth: and states that it discharges daily into the Dead sea about 6,090,000 tons of water. Viscount Chatenu-briand (who travelled nearly a century after him) found the Jordan to be six or seven feet deep close to the shore, and about fifty paces in breadth. The late Count Volney asserts it to be scarcely sixty paces wide at its embouchure. Messrs Bankes and Buckingham, who crossed it in January, 1816, pretty nearly at the same ford over which the Israelites passed on their first entering the promised land, found the stream extremely rapid; and as it flowed at that part over a bed of pebbles, its otherwise turbid waters were tolerably clear, as well as pure and sweet to the taste. It is here fordable, being not more than four feet deep, with a rapid current. Anciently the Jordan overflowed its banks about the time of barley harvest, or the feast of the passover; when the snows being dissolved on the mountains, the torrents discharged themselves into its channel with great impetuosity. When visited by Mr Maundrell, at the beginning of the last century, he could discern no sign or probability of such inundations, though so late as for as he had been with Moses, so he would be with him, and never fail, nor forsake him: therefore he bid him be strong and of good courage, for he should divide the land for an inheritance to the people. And to engage him to a performance of the law, which he had delivered to Moses, he annexed a continual series of prosperity and success; charging him to make it his study day and night, as the standard of all his future actions, and repeating his former assurance of his presence with him wheresoever he went.

Joshua, thus encouraged by the promise of God, prepared to execute the divine command, and that nothing material might be omitted, he ordered the officers to go through the camp and give notice to the people, that within a few days they should pass the Jordan, in order to possess the land which the Lord their God had given them, and that they should provide them-

the 30th of March; and so far was the river from overflowing, that it ran almost two yards below the brink of its channel. It may be said to have two banks,-the first, that of the river in its natural state; the second, that of its overflowings. After descending the outermost bank, the traveller proceeds about a furlong upon a level strand, be-fore he comes to the immediate bank of the river. This second bank is now (as it anciently was) so beset with bushes, reeds, tamarisks, willows, oleanders, and other shrubs and trees, which form an asylum for various wild animals, that no water is perceptible until the traveller has made his way through them. In this thicket, several kinds of wild beasts used formerly to conceal themselves, until the swelling of the river drove them from their coverts. The passage of this deep and rapid river by the Israelites, at the most unfavourable season, when augmented by the dissolution of the winter snows, was more manifestly miraculous, if possible, than that of the Red sea; because here was no natural agency whatever employed; no mighty winds to sweep a passage as in the former case; no reflux in the tide on which minute philosophers might fasten to depreciate the miracle. It seems, therefore, to have been providentially designed, to silence cavils respecting the former: it was done at noonday, in the presence of the neighbouring inhabitants; and it struck terror into the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites westward of the river, 'whose hearts melted, neither was there any spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel,' Josh. v. 1. The place where the Israelites thus miraculously passed this river, is supposed to be the fords of Jordan mentioned in Judg. iii. 26 .- Horne.

stand before him all the days of his life: selves with victuals for such a march. The city of Jericho was just opposite to the place where they were to pass. Joshua therefore, before his order for their making provision for this march, +1 sent two spies thither to observe the situation and strength of the place, and the avenues to it; because it would be the first place they were to attack; after they had passed the river:

> These spies entering Jericho, went to a public house of entertainment, which was kept by Rahab, and there took up their

> * The usual food of the Israelites, while they sojourned in the wilderness, was manna; but as they approached the promised hand, where they might have provision in an ordinary way, that miraculous bread did perhaps gradually decrease; and in the space of a few days after this was totally withdrawn. They were now in the countries of Sihon and Og, which they had lately conquered, and the victuals which they were commanded to provide themselves with, were such as their new conquest afforded: for being, after three days, to remove very early in the morning, they might not perhaps have had time to gather a sufficient quantity of manna, and to bake it, before they were obliged to march.—Patrick's Commentary.

† This direction for marching is mentioned in the text, before the sending the spies to Jericho. But it seems the spies were sent before that, and returned to the camp at Shittim, before they took

their march towards Jordan.

Interpreters are at variance about the quality of this woman; most agreeing she was an hostess, which is very probable. In ancient times, there was a great affinity between the business of an hostess and a harlot. Those who kept inns, or public houses for the entertainment of strangers, made no scruple of prostituting their bodies'; and for this reason perhaps it is, that in the Hebrew tongue, there is but one word, namely, zonah, to denote persons of both professions. For this reason very likely it was, that the Septuagint, speaking of Rahab, give her the appellation of a harlot, and (as the Septuagint was, at this time, the common translation of the Jews) for this very reason, the two apostles, St Paul, and St James, as they found it in the translation, might make use of the same expression. It is to be observed, however, that as the expression is capable of another sense, the Chaldee paraphrast calls her by a word which comes from the Greek, signifying 'a woman that kept a public house,' without any mark of infamy: and therefore charity should incline us to think the best of a person, whom both these apostles have ranked with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and propounded as an example of faith and good works; who was admitted into the society of God's people; married into a noble family of the tribe of Judah; and of whose posterity Christ the Saviour of the world, was born .- Stackto go in there, information was speedily given to the king of Jericho, that two Israelites were come to search the country.

Upon this the king sent to Rahab to produce them; but she, having timely notice, had hid them upon the roof of the house under the stalks of the flax.* which she had spread there.

Having thus secured the men, she put off the king's messengers with a feigned story, pretending that some men came to her house, but she knew not what they were, nor whence they came; and that when it was dark, before the gates were shut, they went out, but she knew not whither; and to prevent any farther suspicion, she advised to pursue them quickly, for they could not be far off. They therefore sent out several to take them, who went as far as the fords of Jordan,+ but in vain.

As soon as they were departed, Rahab went up to the men she had hid, and thus accosted them: 'I know the Lord hath given you this land, and the fame of you is become so terrible to us, that our people are utterly discouraged. We have heard how the Lord hath dried up the water of the Red sea for you to pass over, when ye came out of Egypt; and how you subdued Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings, on the other side of Jordan. These actions have flashed terror

lodging. But being observed by some among our people, and quite dispirited them. Your God is the only God in heaven and earth. Now therefore, in regard of the service I have done in concealing you, show favour to me and my family, when you come into power, and save us alive; and of this ye shall give me some assurance.'

> They readily promised upon their lives to secure lier, and all that belonged to her. Upon which she let them down by a cord from the window, which faced the country, for her house stood on the town

> When they were down, she advised them to make to the mountains to avoid the pursuers, and to conceal themselves three days, till the search was over.

> The spies seeing the sincerity of the woman in consulting their security, resolved to make her easy in their promise to her; and for a token of their integrity in the performance of it, gave her this farther assurance: when she should see the Israelitish army approach the town, they bid her to be sure to tie a scarlet twine in the window through which she let them down; and to bring her father and mother, brethren, and all her family home to her, and be careful to keep them within doors, that when their forces should enter the town, by this token they might distinguish the house, and spare them. And if any should straggle from the house, their blood should be upon their own heads; but if any one in the house should come to any damage, they would answer for it. To these terms she gladly agreed, and so dismissed them.

The spies having hitherto thus happily succeeded, took Rahab's advice, and made the best of their way to the mountains, where they lay hid three days; in which time, those that went in pursuit of them, despairing to find them, returned to Jericho; and the spies, descending from the mountains, forded over Jordan, arrived safe in the camp, and gave Joshua their general a faithful account of their expedi-

^{*} The houses in eastern countries had flat roofs, so that men might walk or lie upon them. The stalks of flax were either newly cut and laid upon the roof of the house to be dried by the sun, till they were fit to be peeled; or they had been cut the year before, and were now made use of by Rahab to make the king's officers think that nobody had gone upon the roof where the stalks were. - Bp.

^{+ &#}x27;The fords,' or passages, were no doubt parts of the river, where it might be passed without danger, either by walking or swimming across. Here, probably, the messengers waited a considerable time to intercept the spies: and lest they should have staid in the city, the gates were immediately shut to prevent the possibility of their escape. But they found a way of getting out of the city, and in due time of crossing Jordan at the

tion; adding, that for certain the Lord would so distinguish him in the sight of had delivered the country into their hands, for the people were quite dispirited at the fame of them.

Joshua, pleased at this information, departed from Shittim, and led the people down to the river.* Then putting the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh in mind of the agreement made between Moses and them, that they, leaving their families and cattle on this side Jordan, should, with their best forces, go over armed before their brethren, to help to subdue their enemies, and place them in their possessions. They acknowledged the agreement, and declared their readiness to go; promising in all things to be subject to him their general, as they had been to Moses, and in all things to obey his commands, under the penalty of death.

Provision being made for the army in their march, the officers going through the host commanded the people, that when they should see the ark of the covenant of the Lord their God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then they should move and follow it, that they might know the way by which they were to go; because they had never before passed that

way.

And that a decency might be observed in their march, direction was given that they should leave a space of about two thousand cubits between the ark and them.

These dispositions being made, Joshua, early in the morning, on the ninth day of the first month, exhorted the people to sanctify themselves, because the Lord would do wonders next day among them. And giving orders for the priests to move, they took up the ark, and marched with it before the people to the banks of Jordan, where they halted.

Here the Lord told Joshua, that he

Israel, that they should know his presence should be with him, as it had been with Moses.

He directed him to bid the priests, who were to carry the ark, stop upon the brink of the river, -which they did; and Joshua thereupon calling the people together, to hear the words of the Lord their God, told them, 'That they should thereby know, that the living God was amongst them, and would drive out the nations from before them; for the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth should pass before them into the river Jordan: and as soon as the feet of the priests that bare it should touch the waters, they should divide and stand on a heap.'

Accordingly the priests marched into the river with the ark, and stopping in the midst of it, they stood on firm ground; the rapid stream dividing, and the waters, forgetting their fluidity, condense in heaps to afford them a dry passage.+

^{*} From Shittim, where they had lately been encamped, to Jordan was about sixty stadia, according to Josephus; that is, about eight English miles.

⁺ One of the reasons why God divided the river for the Israelites to pass over, seems to be that thereby he might inject a terror into the inhabitants of Canaan, and so facilitate the conquest of their country. On the side of Jordan, the kings of the neighbourhood feared no invasion. The depth of the river, especially at the time of its overflowing, which was in the harvest when the Israelites passed it, was barrier sufficient, they thought, against all that the Israelites could do. For in those days, pontoons were things never heard of in military expeditions; and the stream is, even at this day, allowed to be too fierce and rapid for any one to swim over: and therefore, as they expected no danger from that quarter, and might for that reason draw out no forces to defend that side of their frontier, so the sacred historian has taken care to inform us, that when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, their hearts melted, neither was there spirit in them any more.' And as this miraculous passage could not but fill their enemies with confusion, so it added, no doubt, fresh courage to the Israelites, when they came to consider, that the same God, about forty years before, had wrought the like miracle for them in their passage of the Red sea; that then he divided the waves, to confirm the commission which he had given Moses, and now had parted the stream, to strengthen the authority of his successor, Joshua, and to give them assur-

Thus did God make good his word to Joshua, in promising to magnify him in the sight of the people, by dividing the waters of Jordan, as he had done before to Moses, when the Israelites had passed the Red sea.

Before this miraculous exertion of divine power, the Lord commanded Joshua to select twelve men, one out of each tribe, who, as soon as the people had passed the river, were to take up twelve stones from the place where the priests stood on dry ground, according to the number of the twelve tribes, and to set them up as a memorial of this great miracle, in that place. He commanded them likewise to take other twelve stones, and to carry them on shore, for another memorial of the same miracle.

ance, that he would be with the one as he had been with the other, and empower the latter to make good their possession of the land of promise. even as he had enabled the former to accomplish their deliverance out of the land of bondage. In all rivers whatever, there questionless are some shallower places than ordinary, or some passages, either by boats or bridges, that may be called fords; but that the Jordan, at this time, was either so vastly overflown, as to render these fords impassable, or that the Israelites crossed it at places which the enemy never thought of, and where none of these passes were to be found, is pretty evident from the Canaanites making no preparation to defend their coasts on the river side, and from the great consternation we find them in, when once they understood that the Jewish army had got over. For, whatever opinion we, at this distance of time, may have of the matter, they justly inferred, that the suspension of a rivers course could be effected no other way than by a divine power, either immediately acting itself, or by the instrumentality of its angels. And though there possibly may be some instance in history, wherein by the violence of adverse winds, the course of rivers has either been retarded, or driven back; yet, as we read of no such wind concerned in this event, the prediction of Joshua, and the promises of God concerning this miracle, the time in which he chose to work it, and the analogy it bears with what before was wrought at the Red sea; these, and several other circumstances, make this transaction beyond compare, and rank it, not only among those prodigies which very rarely come to pass, but among those stupendous works which, contrary to the laws of nature, the great author and ruler of the universe, for the preservation of his people, and the manifestation of his own glory, is sometimes observed to do.-Stackhouse.

The priests that carried the ark walked on dry ground to the midst of Jordan; and stopping there, as Joshua had ordered them, he commanded the rest of the people to follow, forty thousand of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, well armed, leading the van.

When they were safely arrived on the other side of the river, the general commanded the priests that bare the ark, which stood in the midst of Jordan till all the people had passed over, to come out of the river with it; which they had no sooner done, than the waters returned to their natural channel, and overflowed the banks, as they usually did.

The Israelites having thus securely passed Jordan, on the tenth day of the first month, encamped in a place called afterwards Gilgal, which was in the east border of Jericho.

Here Joshua erected the twelve stones* which the twelve men had brought out of Jordan as a monument to posterity, that when the descendants of the Israelites in future times should ask the reason of it, they might know that the Lord their God had dried up the waters of Jordan, and caused his people Israel to pass that river on dry land, as he had formerly dried up the Red sea for their passage out of Egypt; and that all the people of the earth might be sensible of the omnipotency of the mighty God of Israel.

This extraordinary event was soon rumoured throughout the adjacent parts, and filled the people with amazement and horror; for when the kings of the Amorites, which were on the west side of Jordan, and the kings of the Canaanites,

^{*} It is very likely that a base of mason-work was erected of some considerable height, and then the twelve stones placed on the top of it; and that this was the case both in Jordan and in Gilgal: for twelve such stones as a man could carry a considerable way on his shoulder, see Josh. iv. 5, could scarcely have made any observable altar, or pillar of memorial: but erected on a high base of mason-work they would be very conspicuous, and thus properly answer the end for which God ordered, them to be set up.—Dr A. Clarke,

which inhabited by the sea, heard that the Lord had miraculously conveyed his people over the river by dividing the waters, their hearts sunk for fear, and their courage failed them.

Joshua having thus conducted the Israelites over the river, God commanded him to cause them all to be circumcised: which being done, the Lord said to Joshua, 'this day I have taken away the shame * of Egypt from you.' And from this act of circumcision, the place where it was done was then called Gilgal.+ Here the

* The 'rolling away the reproach,' or 'taking away the shame,' of Egypt, is supposed, by some, to relate to the reproaches which the Egyptians used to cast upon the Israelites; namely, that the Egyptians, seeing the Israelites wander so long in the wilderness, reproached and flouted them, as if they were brought to be destroyed there, and not conducted into the promised land, from which reproaches God now delivered them, when, by enjoining circumcision, he gave them assurance that they should shortly enjoy the country which no uncircumcised person might inherit. Our learned Spencer thinks the reproach of Egypt to be the slavery to which they had long been there subject, but were now fully declared a free people, by receiving a mark of the seed of Abraham, and being made heirs of the promised land. But the most common opinion is, that, by the reproach of Egypt, is meant nothing else but uncircumcision, with which the Israelites always upbraided other people, and particularly the Egyptians, with whom they had lived so long, and were best acquainted; and, admitting this to be the true (as it is the most unconstrained) sense, this passage is a plain proof that the Israelites could not learn the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians, (as some pretend,) but that the Egyptians, contrary-wise, must have had it from them.—Stackhouse.

† Gilgal, the place where the Israelites encamp-

ed for some time after their passage over the river Jordan, was so called, because here the rite of circumcision, which had long been disused, was renewed; whereupon 'the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt (i. e. uncircumcision) from off you; wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal (i. e. rolling) unto this day,' Josh. v. 9. From this expression the place received its name, and if we look into its situation, we shall find, that, as the Israelites passed over Jordan right against Jericho, Josh. iii. 16. and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho, it is plain, that Gilgal must be situated between Jordan and Jericho; and therefore, since Josephus tells us, that Jericho was sixty furlongs distant from Jordan, and the camp of Gilgal was fifty furlongs from the same river; hence it follows, that Gilgal was ten furlongs, that is, about a mile and a quarter, from Jericho eastward. But

Israelites tarried till their circumcisionwounds were healed; and here it was they kept the passover, t on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening.

Now the Israelites began to enjoy the good of the land; the delicious products of the promised inheritance; for on the next day after the passover they are of the corn, and there being plenty of all fruits, on the morrow the manna was withdrawn.

CHAPTER II.

An angel appears to Joshua. - Jericho taken. -The walls full down .- The Israelites are conquered at Ai.-Achan punished as the cause of God's displeasure .- The Israelites conquer their enemies at Ai.

ALL things being ready for approaching the city of Jericho, & Joshua gave the

the furlongs used by Josephus, make up an Italian mile, so the distance between Gilgal and Jericho will be just two miles; which exactly agrees with the testimony of St Jerome, who makes it two miles distant from Jericho, and a place held in great veneration by the inhabitants of the country, in his days .- Wells's Geography

This was the third passover the Israelites celebrated. The first, was the day before they came out of Egypt. The second, was the year after upon their receiving the law, and setting up the tabernacle in Sinai. The third, was this here in the Holy Land, in the plains of Jericho.

§ Jericho was a city of Canaan, which afterwards

fell to the lot of the tribe of Benjamin, about seven leagues distant from Jerusalem, and two from Jordan. Moses calls it likewise the city of palm-trees, because there were great numbers of them in the plains of Jericho; and not only of palm-trees, but, as Josephus tells us, balsam-trees likewise, which produced the precious liquor in such high esteem among the ancients. of Jericho was watered with a rivulet, which was formerly salt and bitter, but was afterwards sweetened by the prophet Elisha, whereupon the adjacent country, which was watered by it, became not only one of the most agreeable, but most fertile spots in all that country. As to the city itself, after it was destroyed by Joshua, it was, in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite, and, in the times of the last kings of Judea, yielded to none, except Jerusalem. For it was adorned with a royal palace, wherein Herod the Great died; with an hippodromus, or place where the Jewish nobility learned to ride the great-horse, and other arts of chivalry; with an amphitheatre, and other magnificent buildings; as some learned men have observed, that five of but, during the siege of Jerusalem, the treachery

word, and the army marched towards it. The place was strong, well-provided, and full of inhabitants, who had retired into it, and seemed resolved to make a brave de-Joshua therefore undertook to view the place by himself, in order to find out the most advantageous approaches to it. Whilst he was making his observation, there appeared, as he thought, the awful form of a man, but with a lustre in his face that bespoke him more than mor-In his hand he had a flaming sword, and his whole appearance far surpassed any thing of human nature. The Israelitish general advanced to this great unknown with a courage becoming his character, and boldly demanded who he was for. He answered, for Israel, of whose army and people he was the guardian.

At these words the general fell prostrate,* and waited the command of his Lord, who bid him loose his sandals, and not profane the holy place with irreverent approaches. Joshua obeyed, and received new orders for the better management of the siege of Jericho. He was to cause all the forces to march round the place six days successively; and that the seventh day the priests should take the seven trumpets made of rams-horns,† which

were used to declare the jubilee year; that they should go before the ark, and round the city, and when the trumpets sounded first loud, and then low, the people should all give a shout, for then the walls of the city should fall, and every man should march in at the place which was directly before him.

Having rounded the city six days, as they were commanded, on the seventh by break of day they compassed it seven times, and at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, the general said to the people, 'Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city.' With that the people gave a shout, and thereupon the walls of the city fell down flat;

‡ Whatever materials these trumpets were made

of, it is impossible to conceive that there should be any power in their sound to demolish cities: and though the noise of a great number of people might be very loud, yet still it would require a miracle in Joshua to know what the just proportion was between their noise, and the strength of the walls of Jericho, since the least deviation in this respect would have defeated the whole experi-What the effect of gunpowder, or of other sulphureous matter fired under ground, or in the bowels of the earth, is, no one, that has seen either the springing of a mine, or felt the convulsions of an earthquake needs be told; but that no strata-gem of this kind could be employed in the siege of Jericho, is manifest, because the invention of gunpowder is a novel thing, nor had the Israelites been long enough on the western side of Jordan to have undermined its walls, even though they had had the secret of some inflammatory stratum to have lodged under them. On the contrary, the whole process of this siege (if we may so call it) was managed at such a rate, as plainly discovered an expectance of a miracle to be wrought; for had not this been the case, instead of sauntering about the walls for seven days, they should have been working in their trenches, and carrying on their approaches, as we now call it. The art of war was then but in its infancy; and, as the manner of undermining and blowing up the most ponderous bodies was what the ancients were unacquainted with, so was the battering-ram an invention of a later date than some imagine. Pliny indeed seems to say, that Epens first made use of it at the siege of Troy; but, in all probability, Ezekiel is the earliest author that mentions this machine, and perhaps the first time that it was employed was under Nebuchadnezzar, at the siege of Jerusalem. But there is no need to ransack history for the confutation of this system, which they who propose it do nevertheless acknowledge. that, though the walls of Jericho might have fallen without any extraordinary act of the divine power,

* By this act of adoration, the title of Jehovah, performed and given by Joshua, and accepted by the other, it is evident, that this guardian or captain of the Lord's host was Christ, the son of God, who was pleased in this manner to appear to Joshua, both to encourage and direct him.

of its inhabitants provoked the Romans to destroy it. After the siege was over, there was another city built, but not upon the same place where the two former stood; for the ruins of them are seen to this day. Of what account and bigness it was, we have no certain information; but some later travellers inform us, that, at present, it is no more than a poor, nasty village of the Arabs, consisting of about thirty miserable huts, so low, that at night one might almost ride over them, without being aware of the fact.—Wells and Maundrell.

[†] The inside of the ram's horn is by no means hard, and may easily be taken out, except about four or five inches at the point, which was to be sawed off, in order to proportion the aperture to the mouth; after which the rest is easily pierced. Trumpets thus made are used by the shepherds in the south of Germany.—Universal History.

so that the army marched directly up to it, and took it, putting all to the sword, both man and beast, old and young; only Rahab and those in her house were saved alive: for Joshua had given a strict charge beforehand to the two spies, (which she had formerly concealed,) to take care, when the town should be taken, to go to her house, and bring out her family, in discharge of their oath to her; which they accordingly did, and left her with all her kindred and substance safe without the camp of Israel.*

Then setting fire to the city, they destroyed every thing in it except the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, which were put into the treasury of the Lord, as it had been commanded. And lest any one should attempt to rebuild this city, Joshua published this prophetic imprecation on the bold undertaker; 'that he should lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son.' + By which he meant, that it should be the ruin of his family.

yet, by the circumstances of the whole account, it appears that this event was altogether miraculous.

* Being aliens or heathens, they were not permitted to come within the camp till they were

proselyted, or at least legally purified.

_Stackhouse.

Joshua seems to have been persuaded of the success of this undertaking, for before the city was taken, Joshua had cautioned the people not to spare any thing that was in it, but to destroy all that lay in their way, except silver, gold, brass, and iron; which were to be consecrated to the Lord. And therefore he warned them not to meddle with any thing, for fear of bringing a curse, not only upon themselves, but upon all the nation of the Israelites.

Notwithstanding the strict charge of Joshna against meddling with any thing that was devoted to this general destruction, or consecrated to the Lord, yet so prevailing was the sacrilegious thirst of gold, that one of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Achan, contrary to the command of the general, took some things of the spoil of either sort, and hid them. This proved of ill consequence to Israel in general, which was discovered upon this occasion.

Joshua being desirous to take in a little city, named Ai, near Bethaven to the east of Bethel, and knowing that it was neither populous nor well defended, detached a body of three thousand men only to go and attack it, who no sooner approached the town, but the inhabitants sallied out and repulsed them, and drove them to their camp, whither those that escaped went so frighted, that they brought a terror upon the whole army.

This defeat so afflicted Joshua, that rending his clothes, and prostrating himself before the ark of the Lord, he lay

foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua, the son of Nun, I Kings xvi. 34. However, after that Hiel had ventured to rebuild it, no scruple was made of inhabiting it; for it afterwards became famous upon many accounts. Here the prophet sweetened the waters of the spring that supplied it, and the neighbouring countries: here Herod built a sumptuous palace; it was the dwelling-place of Zaccheus; and was honoured with the presence of Christ, who vouchsafed likewise to work some miracles here.— Universal History.

⁺ Joshua's denouncing an anathema over the vanquished city is not a thing unprecedented, since the like practice has been observed by some of the greatest generals of other nations; foras-much as Agamemnon, after he had taken Troy, denounced a curse upon those who should at any time attempt to rebuild it; the Romans published a decree of execration against them who should do the like to Carthage; and when Crassus had demolished Sidon, (which had been a lurking place to the tyrant Glaucias,) he wished the greatest evils imaginable upon the head of that man who should but so much as build a wall about the place where it once stood, "Joshua's anathema," says Maimonides, "was pronounced, that the miracle of the subversion of Jericho might be kept in perpetual memory; for whosoever saw the walls sunk deep into the earth (as he understands it) would clearly discern, that this was not the form of a building destroyed by men, but miraculously thrown down by God." Hiel, however, in the reign of Ahab, either not remembering, or not believing this denunciation, was so taken with the beauty of its situation, that he rebailt Jericho, and (as the sacred history informs us) 'laid the versal History.

there till the evening, both he and the removed the accursed thing from among elders; and in token of extreme sorrow you.' and humiliation, sprinkled dust on their reverent heads.

Lord God, hast thou brought this people over Jordan to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites to destroy them? We had been happy hadst thou permitted us to have dwelt on the other side of Jordan. What shall I say, when Israel turn their backs upon their enemies? For when the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of this land shall hear this, they will encompass us, and cut us off; and what! will become of thy honour !'

Lest Joshua should be dispirited by the conquest the enemy had obtained over them, or pine under the apprehension of being deserted by him, God told him there was a latent cause of his displeasure among the people. That some of them had taken of the accursed thing,* and also of those things which were devoted to the Lord, and pretending as if they had brought it all into the treasury of God, had concealed it for their own use. And to put him in a way to clear the camp of this accursed thing, which had brought this judgment upon them, the Lord commanded Joshua to proclaim among the people, 'There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel. Ye cannot stand before your enemies, until ye have

Then directing Joshua how he should find out the offender; and when he was But Joshua, being wholly ignorant of found and convicted, how he should be the offence, and desirous to know the punished; he early next morning sumcause that had provoked God thus to de- moned all the tribes before the Lord: and sert his people, in this humble expostula- the lot being cast upon the tribes, the tion complained to him, 'Wherefore, O tribe of Judah was the tribe to whom the guilty person belonged. Then proceeding by lot from tribe to family, from family to household, and thence to particular persons, the lot fell at last upon Achan.

> Having thus happily discovered the person, Joshua, like a prudent judge, with great mildness examined the criminal, and brought him to a confession: 'I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel,' said he, 'for when I saw among the spoil a royal garment+ and two hundred shekels of silver, with a wedget of gold of fifty shekels weight, my covetousness prompted me to take them, which I did, and hid them in the earth in the midst of my

> Joshua, for the more evident conviction, sent messengers to Achan's tent; who finding the things hid, as he had confessed, brought them to the assembly, and laid them before the Lord.

^{*} In the same sense is the word anathema used in the New Testament, by St Paul, who prononnees offenders anathema, separated from God, that is, accursed: which is the old word for excommunication, upon the breach of several cauons in the most early ages of the church. In this one instance it is observable, that though it was but one man that was actually guilty; yet the guilt was charged upon the whole people, and they felt the effects thereof, till they had convinced and punished the offender. How great then is the guilt of nations in general where sins are epidemical, and repeated from age to age!

⁺ In the original, this robe is called a garment of Shinar, that is, of Bubylon; and the general opinion is, that the richness and excellency of it consisted not so much in the stuff whereof it was made, as in the colour whereof it was dyed, which most suppose to have been scarlet, a colour in high esteem among the ancients, and for which the Babylonians were justly famous. Bochart however maintains, that the colour of this robe was various, and not all of one sort; that the scarlet colour the Babylonians first received from Tyre, but the parti-colour, whether so woven, or wrought with the needle, was of their own invention, for which he produces many passages out of heathen authors. However this be, it is certain that the robe could not fail of being a very rich and splendid one, and therefore captivated either Achan's pride, or rather covetousness; since his purpose seems to have been, not so much to wear it himself as to sell it for a large price. _Bochart

[‡] This was made in the form of a tongue, and for that reason is not improperly sometimes called a tongue of gold.

by his own confession and the notoriousness of the fact, Joshua proceeded to execution, by the express command of God; which was thus: they took Achan, with the garments, the money, and the wedge of gold, as evidences of his guilt, and with him his sons, his daughters,* his cattle, his tent, and all his moveables; and brought them into the valley of Achor (which from him took its name, signifying trouble) where he and his family, being first stoned, were afterwards burnt. And to perpetuate the memory of this for a warning to others, they raised a great heap of stones over them.+

The vengeance of the Almighty being appeased by the sentence executed upon the delinquent Achan, he encouraged Joshua to attack Ai afresh, assuring him that he had given the king of Ai and all his people and country into his hand, and

* Dr Adam Clarke is of opinion that Achan only was stoned, and that his substance was burned with fire; or that even his oxen, &c. were destroyed, yet his sons and daughters were left uninjured, and were brought out into the valley only that they might see and fear, and be for ever deterred by their father's punishment from imitating his example. The reason which the doctor assigns for this opinion is, that the children of Achan could not justly suffer with him, because of the law, Deut. xxiv. 16, unless they had been accomplices in his guilt, of which, as he suggests, there is no evidence. The learned editor of Calmet acquiesces in this opinion, and gives the following as the probable sense of the passage :- " They stoned him (Achan) with stones: and burned them (his property) with fire, and (rather or) stoned them with stones;" that is, making a distinction in guilt between his property, and the things stolen; "and raised over him (Achan) a heap of stones." In justification of this interpretation of the passage, he suggests, that, had his family been stoned, the heap of stones would have included them also; whereas it is raised over him, and that the burning was probably applied to such things as might suffer by burning, and the stoning to what the fire might have had little or no effect on .- Carpenter.

† Such a heap was also accumulated over Absalom. The Arabs, long after the time of Joshua, expressed their detestation of deceased enemies in the same manner. Similar heaps were raised over persons murdered in the highways in the time of the prophet Ezekiel, as they also are to this day, in Palestine, and other parts of the East.-Horne. history

And now Achan being duly convicted, I that he should do to them as he had done to Jericho and her king; only for the encouragement of the soldiers, he allowed them the plunder of the city and the cattle for themselves; giving Joshua particular instructions t to lay a party of men in ambuscade & behind the city.

In order to this action, Joshua selected thirty thousand men, out of which he appointed five thousand to hide themselves between Bethel and Ai, who, upon the signal that he should give them, which was by holding up a spear with a banner upon it, should enter the city, and set it on fire; himself having first, by another stratagem, drawn all the forces out of the town to pursue him in his pretended flight.

Every thing being prepared according to the direction of Joshua, he drew up before the north part of the city of Ai. and towards night he marched into the valley in sight of the enemy to tempt them to sally out upon him. This succeeded as Joshua desired; for the king of Ai, thinking he had them sure now, early the next morning drew out all his forces to give Israel battle; who at the first charge gave way and fled.

This so animated the king of Ai's army, that concluding the Israelites fled indeed through fear of them, they called out all the citizens to assist in the pursuit, which they eagerly did, leaving the town naked and defenceless. But this confidence of victory cost them dear; for when Joshua by his sham flight had drawn them a good distance from the city, he gave the signal to the ambuscade, who immediately entered the city and set it on fire.

When Joshua by the smoke perceived his men had possessed themselves of the town, he faced about, and charged the

I God would not destroy Ai by a miracle, as he had done Jericho, because he had a mind to make his people formidable for their power and policy to other nations, with whom they were afterwards to engage.

§ This is the first ambuscade we read of in

Aian army; who, not in the least expecting the Israelites would rally, began to think of retiring into the city; but when they saw their city in flames, they were so dispirited, that they had no power to fight or fly. In the mean time the ambuscade having performed their orders in burning the city, fell upon the rear of the king of Ai's dismayed forces, who being thus encompassed were cut to pieces.

Having thus completely vanquished the enemy, Joshua marched to Ai, and put all he found in it to the sword; so that the number of the slain that day amounted to twelve thousand men and women.

The cattle and spoil of the city were given to the soldiers, who burnt the city, and made it a heap of rubbish. As for the king of Ai, he was taken prisoner in the flight; and being brought before the general, he was by his command hanged on a tree* till sunset, at which time he was taken down, and buried under a great heap of stones at the entrance of the gate of the city.

CHAPTER III.

Joshua erects an altar, and repeats to the people the words of the law of Moses.—Several kings combine against Israel, and are condemned to perpetual bondage.—Joshua rescues Gibeon from the attack of five kings.—Is empowered to confirm his authority by an extraordinary command.—Returns and re-encamps his army in Gilgal.—Obtains divers signal victories.—The tribes are appointed their distinct lots of inheritance.—The death of Joshua.

Joshua having thus happily succeeded in this action against Ai, in token of gratitude to the great giver of victory, erected an altar to him in mount Ebal, as the Lord had by Moses before commanded, on which he offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings. And then he not only read unto the people, both Israelites and strangers, the words of the law given by Moses, but wrote also upon great stones a copy of the law which Moses had written.+

The fame of the Israelites' success against Jericho and Ai, and the terrible slaughter of the inhabitants, alarmed all the kings on that side Jordan, who, consulting the common security, confederated together, and entered into a league for their mutual defence.

But the Gibeonites,‡ who were more deeply affected with the rumour of the Israelites' courage and power, distrusting a confederated force against so great and numerous a people, and so well skilled in the art of war, had recourse to a stratagem to save themselves from the general destruction, which, they plainly perceived, hung over their heads.

They chose a certain number of their men, who were instructed to feign themselves to be ambassadors, come from a far country, to treat for peace, and enter into a league with Israel.

To give this deception an air of truth, they dressed themselves in old clothes, with old clouted shoes on their feet, and put dry mouldy bread into old sacks, and wine into old bottles.

^{*} The kings of Canaan lay under the same curse as their subjects, and probably were more deeply criminal. The reserving of the king of Ai for a solemn execution, would tend to strike terror into the other kings, contribute to the success of Israel, and give their proceedings the stamp of a judicial process, and of executing the vengeance of God upon his enemies.—Scott.

[†] It is no great difficulty to apprehend how many of the Gentile nations came to imitate the Jews in many of their religious observances and rites, since the Mosaic law was so publicly exposed to the sight of all.

[†] The Gibeonites were a part of the Hivite Canaanites, Gibeon being situated not far from Ai, to the westward.—Pyle,

These bottles were made of leather, in which they formerly, and now in some countries, keep their wine. The Arabs, and all those who lead a wandering life, still keep their water, milk, and other liquors, in leathern bottles, which are generally made of goat-skins. The liquors thus keep more fresh than they would otherwise do. These nations never go a journey without a small leathern bottle of water hanging by their side like a scrip. When these bottles are old and much used, they mend them either by sewing in a piece, or by gathering up the broken place in the manner of a purse,—Chardin.

Thus accounted, they came to the Israelitish camp at Gilgal, and presenting themselves before the general, told him, they were come from a far country, and desired to enter into a league with Israel.

The people at first suspected these ambassadors, and told them, that perhaps they possessed part of that land which God had given them; and, if so, they could not make peace with them. Joshua, putting this question directly to them, asked them, who they were, and from whence they came? To which they cunningly, but falsely replied, 'From a far country are we come, where we have heard of the fame of the Lord thy God; of all that he did for thee in Egypt, and to Sihon and Og, the Amorite kings. Wherefore our governors bid us take provision for our journey, and tell you, we are your servants, and desire to be in amity with you.'

Then producing their mouldy bread, their torn bottles, and their old clothes and shoes, they assured them, that they took the bread hot out of their houses when they came from home, that their bottles were then new, and that their garments and shoes were worn old by reason of the length of their journey.

The Israelites were prevailed on in this respect, though they had an infallible method of coming to the knowledge of the deceit. But neglecting to ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord, they suffered themselves to be imposed on by the seeming simplicity of the subtle Gibeonites.

This stratagem of theirs had its desired effect. The credulous Israelites believed the plausible story of the Gibeonites, confirmed sufficiently, as they thought, by demonstrable tokens, and of which their own eyes were judges; so that without any farther hesitation or scruple, they received them into their alliance; Joshua making peace with them to let them live, and the princes of the congregation swearing solemnly to observe it.

But within three days this cheat was discovered; and they, who pretended to come from a distant country, proved to be their neighbours, and inhabited a part of that land which God had given Israel to possess.

When the Israelites found out the design of the Gibeonites, which was to prevent their cities from sharing the fate of their neighbours, they could not forbear mutinying against the princes who had sworn to observe the league; which they perceiving, endeavoured to pacify them by urging the necessity they were under of keeping their oath, lest they should incur God's displeasure; and that though the alliance extended to the saving their lives, yet it did not exempt them from tribute or service, from which they might reap considerable advantages, intending to make them hewers of wood, and drawers of water,* for the use of all the congregation.

This being approved, appeased the people; and Joshua calling for the Gibeonites, expostulated the matter with them, for thus imposing on, and deceiving them; till they in excuse answered, that they were sensible God had given them all the

[.] The disgrace of this state lay not in the laboriousness of it, but in its being the common employment of the females; if the ancient customs among the same people were such as prevail now. The most intelligent travellers in those countries represent collecting wood for fuel, and carrying water, as the peculiar employment of the females. The Arab women of Barbary do so, according to Dr Shaw. The daughters of the Turcomans in Palestine are employed, according to D'Arvieux, in fetching wood and water for the accommodation of their respective families. From these circumstances Mr Harmer reasons thus: "The bitterness of the doom of the Gibeonites does not seem to have consisted in the laboriousness of the service enjoined them, for it was usual for women and children to perform what was required of them; but its degrading them from the characteristic employment of men, that of bearing arms; and condemning them and their posterity for ever to the employment of females. The not receiving them employment of females. The not receiving them as allies was bitter; the disarming them who had been warriors, and condemning them to the employment of females, was worse; but the extending this degradation to their posterity, was bitterest of all. It is no wonder that in these circumstances they are said to have been cursed."-A. Clarke.

them to kill all the inhabitants; and that they had made use of this stratagem to save their lives.

Though they escaped with their lives, they were justly condemned to perpetual pondage, as a punishment for their wicked design; and Joshua himself pronounced this sentence against them: 'Now therefore are ye cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, even hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the use of my God.'*

The Gibeonites, glad to come off so well, replied, 'Behold, we are in thy hand, do with us what thou wilt.'

Thus Joshua delivered the Gibeonites from the fury of the Israelites, who would have put them all to the sword. But though they had by this policy saved their lives, with the loss of their liberty, yet their neighbours the Amorites put them in fresh danger of losing them. For, deserting the common interest, and making a separate league with Israel for themselves, they resolved to take revenge of them.

Accordingly Adonizedek, king of Jebus,+ taking with him four neighbouring kings, Hoham, king of Hebron; Piram, king of Jarmuth; Japhia, king of Lachish; and Debir, king of Eglon, with their joined forces, they encamped before Gibeon.

The Gibeonites, not daring to trust the strength of their city against so potent and confederate a force, despatched messengers to their new and great allies to their camp at Gilgal, to acquaint them, that the kings of the Amorites, that dwelt in the mountains, had armed against them; and to entreat them to come up to their relief with speed.

Joshua was bound in honour and in-

land where they dwelt, and commanded terest to succour them, to which God himself gave particular encouragement, assuring him of victory. Upon which Joshua by a swift march came up with them by night, and surprised them in the morning.

> The action was hot for some time, but they were soon put to flight; and as they fled, a storm of hail tovertook them,

> ‡ Commentators are not agreed whether we are to understand this miracle of a shower of stones. properly so called, or of a shower of hail. The learned Calmet, in a dissertation prefixed to his Commentary upon Joshua, has taken a great deal of pains to show, that the stones, which the Lord is said to have cast upon the Amorites, were not ordinary hailstones, (since it would be incongruous, as he thinks, to interest God in so common an occurrence) but real solid stones, which he supposes might have been engendered in the air by a whirlwind carrying up sand or gravel into a cloud, and there mixing it with some such oily or nitro-sulphureous matter, as might consolidate, and form it into a combustible body; that so, when, by frequent agitation, it came to be fired, it might burst through the cloud, and scattering itself upon the explosion, might fall down upon the earth in the nature of a perfect shower of stones. That great quantities of stones have in this manner been discharged from the clouds, is evident from several histories. Diodorus Siculus informs us, that as the Persian army were on their march to plunder the temple at Delphos, thunder and lightning, and a violent storm of stones fell in their camp, and destroyed a great number of men. In the reign of Tullus Hostilius, when news was brought to the government that it had rained stones upon Mount Alba, those who were sent to inquire into the matter, brought word, not only that the fact was true, but that these stones had fallen from the skies with an impetuosity equal to the most violent storm of hail. Not long after the battle at Cannæ, the same author assures us. that a storm of the same kind fell on the same mountain, which lasted for two whole days; and events of this nature, attested by the best authors, have been so frequent at Rome, at Capua, at Livinium, and several other places in Italy, that a man must be destitute of all modesty who pretends to deny them absolutely. Nay, not only great quantities of smaller stones, but sometimes stones of a prodigious size have been known to fall from the clouds, whereof this learned author, among many others, gives us several instances, both of ancient and modern date. But the truth is, there is no reason for carrying this miracle so high; since a shower of hailstones will not only do the work every whit as well, but seems to be the genuine import of Joshua's words: who, having acquainted us, that 'the Lord cast down great stones upon the Amorites,' adds, by way of explication, 'that they were more that died by the hailstones than by the sword;' where it is reasonable to suppose, that had there been great stones, as well as hail, the death of the greater number of those that perished would not have

1 This place was afterwards, in David's time,

called Jerusalem.

^{*} From the Gibeonites being thus given or dedicated to the service of the tabernacle, and of all the congregation, their posterity, after the building of the temple, were called Nethinims, that is,

which fell with such violence upon them, that more were destroyed by the hailstones than by the sword. The five confederate kings, escaping the storm in their flight, made to a cave in a place called Makkedah, and there hid themselves from the pursuit of the enemy; but Joshua having intelligence of their concealment, ordered the cave to be blocked up, and set a guard upon it to prevent their escape; commanding the rest of the army to continue the pursuit, and to do execution on their enemies, lest they should retreat to any fortified place.

That they might not want time to complete their victory, Joshua, addressing himself to God in prayer, received authority from him to command the sun, in the sight of Israel, to stand still, saying, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon.'

been attributed to the hail only. Nor are there wanting examples of a later date, of the vast havock and destruction that hailstones from one to five pounds weight have done in several places; killing both man and beast, and laying the whole country waste, for some sixty, or seventy miles round. And therefore, since it is agreed on all hands, that hailstones have frequently fallen, large enough to destroy never so great a number of people, when naked and defenceless against their blows, what need is there for our having recourse to any other solution? The oriental hail storm is a most terrific agent; the hailstones are sometimes as big as walnuts, and rather resemble large masses of ice, which scatter desolation and terror over the face of nature with irresistible fury. A shower of hail indeed, may be supposed to proceed from a more natural cause: but when the event happened at the very instant wherein God promised to assist his people against their enemies; when, though it might have annoyed either army, it fell only on that which God had before determined to ruin; and fell so very heavily upon it, as to de-stroy more than the sword of the conquerors had done;' such an event as this, I say, cannot but be looked upon as a miraculous interposition of providence, how fortnitous soever the concourse of second causes may be. In working of miracles, God usually employs natural causes and productions. He does not create any new thing for the purpose; but makes use of what is already created, in a new and extraordinary manner: and therefore, though the shower of hail, and probably the wind too, which made it fall with such impetuosity, were both of them natural; yet the sending them at the very nick of time, and directing them to fall upon the enemy only, in this there was manifestly the hand of God, and something supernatural.— Blackhouse.

which fell with such violence upon them, that more were destroyed by the hailstones than by the sword. The five confederate kings, escaping the storm in their flight,

* The sun appeared to rise over Gibeon, which lay to the east of the Israelites, and the moon to be about setting over Ajalon, which lay to the west of them, towards the Mediterranean sea. In this situation, Joshua, moved by a divine impulse, uttered the invocation in the sight of Israel; and in consequence, the sun 'hasted not to go down about a whole day,' that is, in that climate, near the vernal equinox, about 13 hours; and thus about twenty-six hours of day-light were afforded them for the destruction of their enemies, during which they took the city of Makkedah, and slew the five kings who hid themselves in a cave near it, Josh. x. 21. &c. Dr Hales.—It can never be affirmed that the miracle here recorded of the sun standing still is impossible or incredible, since it is certain and self-evident that the great Author of nature, who gave being and motion to the sun and stars, may stop that motion when and as long as he pleases, especially when their rest will contribute to his glory, (as was the case in the present instance,) as much as their continued motion does. We talk of greater and lesser miracles, when, in reality, to the almighty power of God all things are equally easy. The motion and other properties of all created beings were at first impressed by him; and with the same facility, he can retard or suspend their operations, for they have no power of resisting the first movement of his will. Since therefore every thing, that is contrary to the ordinary course of nature, requires the interposition of an Almighty power, and whatever is not impossible in itself, is equally possible with God; with him there can be no difference between stopping the waters of Jordan, and drying up the Red sea; between drawing water from the stony rock, and arresting the sun in the firmament of heaven; for 'whatsoever he pleaseth, that he doeth, in heaven and in earth, in the sea and all deep places.' Stackhouse .- It is remarkable, that the terms in which this event is recorded in the sacred writings, do not agree with what is now known concerning the motions of the heavenly bodies; for, whereas it is recorded, that the sun and moon were made to stop for a whole day, it is now sufficiently known that day and night are not caused by any motion of the sun, but by the rotation of the earth on its own axis. It should be remembered, however, that as in those early ages men had not the slightest notion of the modern discoveries in astronomy, it was unavoidably ne-cessary that the event should be described according to the knowledge which then obtained. If God had dictated to Joshua to record the miracle in terms suitable to the modern discoveries in astronomy, Joshua would have appeared to express it in a manner directly contrary to all rules of science then known; and his account of what had happened would have been objected to, as false in astronomy. It would have appeared rather a wild fancy, or a gross blunder of his own, than a true account of a real miracle; and so would have

of the rolling luminaries.

Having received so remarkable a display of divine favour and concurrence, in vanguishing the foes of Israel, Joshua returned from the chase, and ordered the cave to be opened, where the five kings lay hid; he commanded them to be brought before him. Then calling for the officers of the army, he bid them set their feet upon the necks of those kings; which they did.

This was not to insult over the wretched captives, but an emblematical prediction of their future success over the enemies of God's people. 'For thus,' says Joshua, 'I will do to all that oppose you.' Then commanding execution to be done upon them, he caused them to be hanged up on several trees until the evening; when he ordered them to be taken down,

been received with little attention by the persons for whom it was written. Thus, when God directed Joshua to record this miracle, he did not direct him to record it in a manner more agreeable to true astronomy; because, if he had done so, unless he inspired the world at the same time with a true knowledge of astronomy, the account would rather have tended to raise amongst those who read it and heard of it, disputes and "oppo-sitions of science falsely so called," than have promoted the great ends of religion intended by it. Shuckford.—A confused tradition concerning this miracle of the sun standing still, and a similar one in the time of Ahaz, when the sun went back ten degrees, had been preserved amongst one of the most ancient nations, as we are informed by one of the most ancient historians. Herodotus, speaking of the Egyptian priests, says, "They told me that the sun has four times deviated from his course, having twice risen where he uniformly goes down, and twice gone down where he uniformly rises. This, however, had produced no alteration in the climate of Egypt; the fruits of the earth, and the phenomena of the Nile, had been always the same." The last part of this observation confirms the conjecture that this account of the Egyptian priests had a reference to the two miracles respecting the sun mentioned in Scripture; for they were not of that kind which could introduce any change in climates or seasons. I think it idle, if not impious, to undertake to explain how the miracle was performed; but one who is not able to explain the mode of doing a thing, argues ill if he thence infers that the thing was not done. The machine of the universe is in the hand of God: he can stop the motion of any part, or of the whole, with less trouble, and less danger of injuring it, than any of us can stop a watch. - Watson.

the course of nature, and stop the motion and cast into the cave where they had hid themselves, making their intended sanctuary their sepulchre.

> Having totally routed the combined forces, Joshua proceeded to reduce the cities to subjection of the Israelites. He marched first to Makkedah, then to Libnah; from thence to Lachish, where he slew the king of Gezer, who came to the relief of Lachish; from Lachish he marched to Eglon, from Eglon to Hebron, and from Hebron to Debir. All which places he took by storm, and put the inhabitants, both kings and people, to the sword, as God had commanded.

> Joshua having performed such great exploits, and conquered so many kings and nations in one expedition* through the assistance of the mighty God of Israel, returned with his victorious army to his camp at Gilgal.

> The signal conquest of the Israelites spread a fame, and greatly alarmed the more distant nations, especially the Hazorites, whose king thinking it in vain for the princes of Canaan to encounter singly with so puissant and victorious an army, sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to all the neighbouring princes within reach, to invite them into a league, that with their united force they might drive the Israelites out of the land they had conquered.

> Enraged at the continual success of the Israelites, the different powers, next campaign, raised a very numerous army to engage Joshua; whose God, to chastise the pride and presumption of his enemies, and to encourage his general, bid him not to fear them, 'For to-morrow,' says he, I will deliver them into the hand of Israel, and thou shalt disable their horses, and burn their chariots.'+

^{*} All these great achievements are by some chronologers reckoned to have been performed in the first year of Joshua's government, and placed in the year of the world 2553.

⁺ Military chariots were much in use among the

ment and instructions God had given him, the and plunder of them to the soldiers. without delay took the field, marched disuddenly upon them, that he immediately routed them; and in the pursuit put all to the sword. And because Jabin, the

Egyptians, Canaanites, and other oriental nations. Two sorts are mentioned in the Scriptures; one in which princes and generals rode, the other to break the enemy's battalions by rushing in among them, armed with iron scythes, which caused terrible havoc. The most ancient war-chariots, of which we read, are those of Pharaoh, which were destroyed in the Red sea. It does not appear that the Hebrews ever used chariots in war, though Solomon had a considerable number; but we know of no military expedition in which he em-· ployed them. In the second book of Maccabees, mention is made of chariots armed with scythes, which the king of Syria led against the Jews. These chariots were generally placed on the whole front of the infantry, ranged in a straight line, parallel sometimes to the cavalry. Some of them were with four, others with two wheels only: these were driven against the enemy, whom they never failed to put into disorder, when they were followed closely by the line. There were two ways of rendering them useless: first, by opening a passage for them through the battalious: secondly, by killing the horses before they were too far advanced: in which case they were of the greatest disservice to those who employed them, because they not only embarrassed them, but, further, broke the closeness of the line, and checked all the force of the onset. The ancient chariots are described in the following manner: "The beam, to which the horses were fastened, was armed with spikes with iron-points, which projected forward: the yokes of the horses had two cutting falchions of three cubits length: the axle-trees had fixed to them two iron-spits, with scythes at their extremities; the spokes of the wheels were armed with javelins, and the very felloes with scythes, which tore every thing they met with to pieces. The axle-tree was longer, and the wheels stronger than usual, that they might be the better able to bear a shock, and the chariot less liable to be overturned." The charioteer, who was covered all over with armour, sat in a kind of tower, made of very solid wood about breast high, and sometimes men well armed were put into the chariot, and fought from thence with darts and arrows. So that a dreadful slaughter these machines must at first have made, when they met with the enemy's troops; but, in time, when men came to find out the way of declining them, they did not do so much execution, and were consequently disused .- See Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius, Xenophon, &c.

Relying on the strength of their num- king of Hazor,* had been the head of the bers, the combined potentates vainly confederacy, he caused that city to be Lattered themselves they should intimi- burnt to the ground; but all the other date the general of the Israelites; but cities, whose inhabitants were slain in the Joshua, in pursuance of the encourage- action, he left standing, and gave the cat-

Thus did Joshua by degrees recover all rectly towards the enemy, and fell so the land of Canaan, subduing the people that possessed it, and slaving all their kings, one and thirty in number, with the Anakites or giants, of whom he left none remaining, except in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. + And now Joshua began to think of a settlement, which he did, by dividing the land beyond Jordan among the nine tribes and half; ‡ who being

> * It is probable that Jabin was the common name of all the kings of Hazor .- The city of Hazor was situated above the lake Semechon, in Upper Galilee, according to Josephus. It was given to the tribe of Naphtali, Josh. xix. 36, who it appears did not possess it long; for though it was burnt by Joshua, ver. 11, it is likely that the Canaanites rebuilt it, and restored the ancient government, as we find a powerful king there about one hundred and thirty years after the death of Joshua, Judg. iv. 1. It is the same that was taken by Tiglath-pilezer, together with Kadesh, to which it is contiguous; see 2 Kings xv. 29. It is supposed to have given name to the valley or plain of Hazor or Nasor, situated between it and Kadesh, where Jonathan and Mattathias defeated the armies of Demetrius, and slew three thousand of their men, I Maccab. xi. 63-74. It was in ancient times the metropolitan city of all that district, and a number of petty kings or chieftains were subject to its king; and it is likely that it was those tributary kings who were summoned to attend the king of Hazor on this occasion; for Joshua, having conquered the southern part of the promised land, the northern parts seeing themselves exposed made a common interest, and joining with Jabin, endeavoured to put a stop to the progress of the Israelites .- See Culmet, and Dr A. Clarke.

+ Three cities of the Philistines, whose country the Israelites did not possess till the time of

The following, according to Josephus, are the territorial divisions of these tribes:- "Judah had assigned him by lot the upper part of Judea, reaching as far as Jerusalem, and its breadth extended to the lake of Sodom. Now in the lot of this tribe there were the cities of Askelon and Gaza. The lot of Simeon, which was the second, included that part of Idumea which bordered upon Egypt and Arabia. As to the Benjamites, their lot fell so, that its length reached from the river Jordan to the sea; but in breadth it was bounded by Jerusalem and Bethel; and this lot was the narrowest of all, by reason of the goodness of the settled in their several possessions, Joshua set up the tabernacle at Shiloh.*

Then calling the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and acknowledging that they had faithfully kept their covenant in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to subdue their enemies, he kindly dismissed them, advising them to continue steadfast in their duty to God; and giving them his blessing, they returned to their families, loaded with spoils, consisting of gold, brass, iron, raiment, and a great quantity of cattle, which was their share of the plunder taken from the enemy during the war.

These two tribes and half, being safely arrived on the borders of Jordan, erected an altar, not for any religious use, but as

land; for it included Jericho and the city of Jerusalem. The tribe of Ephraim had by lot the land that extended in length from the river Jordan to Gezer; but in breadth as far as from Bethel, till it ended at the Great Plain. The half-tribe of Manasseh had the land from Jordan to the city Dora; but its breadth was at Bethshan, which is now called Scythopolis; and after these was Issachar, which had its limits in length, Mount Carmel and the river, but its limit in breadth was Mount Tabor. The tribe of Zebulun's lot included the land which lay as far as the lake of Genesareth, and that which belonged to Carmel and the The tribe of Asher had that part which was called the Valley, for such it was, and all that part which lay over-against Sidon. The city Arce be-longed to their share, which is also named Actipus. The Naphthalites received the eastern parts, as far as the city of Damascus and the Upper Galilee, unto Mount Libanus, and the Fountains of Jordan, which rise out of that mountain; that is, out of that part of it whose limits belong to the neigh-bouring city of Arce. The Danites' lot included all that part of the valley which respects the sun-setting, and were bounded by Azotus and Dora; as also they had all Jamnia and Gath, from Ekron to that mountain where the tribe of Judah begins."

* This appears to have been a considerable town about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, in the tribe of Ephraim, and nearly in the centre of the whole land. To this place both the camp of Israel, and the ark of the Lord, were removed from Gilgal, after a residence there of seven years. Here the tabernacle remained one hundred and thirty years, as is generally supposed, being the most conveniently situated for access to the different tribes, and for access to the different tribes, and on all sides; for it is added, the land was subdued before them—the Canaanites were so completely subdued, that there was no longer any general resistance to the Israelitish arms.—Dr Adam

a memorial to succeeding ages, that though they were parted from their brethren by Jordan, yet they were all of one extraction and religion, and had an equal right to the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, and the worship performed there.

This had like to have proved of fatal consequence, and occasioned a war between them and the other tribes; to whom the matter being either misrepresented, or they misapprehending it, and suspecting their brethren on the other side of Jordan were ready to revolt from God and them, they unanimously assembled their forces at Shiloh, in order to declare war against them.

. But before they proceeded to extremities, they chose ten princes, one out of each tribe, and they the chiefs of their families, with Phinehas and Eleazar, and sent them away to inquire into the cause of this new-erected altar.

On their arrival, they accosted them in very severe terms, charging them with rebellion against the Lord. To aggravate the matter farther, they put them in mind of the sin of Peor; and to let them see that it was not out of an officious busy temper or humour that they came to them thus, but out of a generous concern for the whole people, they said, 'If thou thus rebel against the Lord, he will soon be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.'

This they enforced by the late instance of Achan. And to prevent any objection, and take from them all pretence of excuse or defence, they added: 'If ye have done this from any apprehension that the land ye possess on that side Jordan is unclean, or less holy than ours, because the tabernacle is on our side the river, return and settle among us where the tabernacle resteth; but by no means rebel against the Lord, nor us, in building you an altar besides the altar of the Lord.'

The Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, were very much concerned at the ill opinion their brethren entertained of nocency, with a solemn appeal to God, returned answer to Phinehas and his companions in this manner:

'The Lord of the whole world, and all Israel, shall know how innocent we are of the rebellion with which you charge us. If we have set up an altar in opposition to the Lord's altar, let him judge and punish us; neither do ye show us any But when ye shall know the truth, you will find what we have done was to prevent what you fear. For we considered, that in time to come, your children might say unto our children, What have ye to do with the Lord God For since the Lord hath made Jordan a border and bound between us and you, you have no part in the Lord: that is, you do not belong to the congregation of the Lord, nor have any right to come before his tabernacle, nor to offer upon his altar; and so your children might be an occasion to our children to turn rebels to the Lord. Therefore we agreed to build an altar, not for burntoffering, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between you and us and our generations after us; that when we should come to perform sacrifice to the Lord with our burnt-offering and sacrifice before him, if your children should say unto ours, Ye have no part in the Lord; our children might reply, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not to sacrifice upon, but to be a witness between us and you. But as to the matter you charge us with, God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, meatofferings, or sacrifices, besides the altar of our God, that is before his tabernacle.'

Phinehas and the princes of the people that were with him, struck with this just vindication of the Reubenites and the rest, applauded them for it; and Phinehas, to testify his sense and approbation of their innocence, assured them that he es-

But well knowing their own in- | teemed the proof they had given of it as a token of their regard to God, and of his presence with them.

Then taking leave of their brethren, they returned in triumph to the Israelites at Shiloh, who with infinite pleasure and joy received the good tidings of their brethren's innocence, and of their pious care and zeal to preserve their posterity in the fear and service of the true God. changing their angry thoughts of war into those of tenderness and peace, they blessed God for the happy issue of this dangerous affair. As for the Reubenites and their brethren, to prevent any future jealousy or suspicion of their intentions, they called the altar which they had built Ed, which signifies a witness, adding this as the reason of the name, 'For it shall be a witness between us and our brethren, the other tribes of Israel, that the Lord is God.' Intimating by this, that though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet both had but one God, who was the God of Israel.

The great warrior of Israel having obtained a complete victory over his enemies, enjoyed the fruits of his labour in the agreeable repose of a settled peace; and at last being grown old, and foreseeing his end to be near at hand, he caused all Israel to be assembled; to whom he thus briefly enumerated the blessings God had bestowed on their ancestors and themselves: 'Your fathers dwelt on the other side of Jordan, from whence the Lord brought Abraham his servant to this happy country, where he blessed his old age with a son, and that son with two others, Jacob and Esau. Esau possessed mount Seir, but Jacob and his family went into Egypt, where their posterity remained under slavisk bondage, till God sent Moses and Aaron to deliver them. You cannot be ignorant of the wonders God wrought by their hands, when he plagued Egypt for their sakes, nor of his care in protecting them against the Amorites. Yourselves have

lately seen confederate nations fall before of the land amongst the tribes, the chilyou, and the way to an easy victory for dren of Israel by God's direction gave you over all your enemies. And now at last he bath left you in quiet possession of a land that aboundeth with all manner of plenty, whose happy soil, without your labour, yields the comfortable product of all that nature can give. In recompence for all this, your great Protector and Benefactor requires only an exact obedience to his laws.'

Then solemnly declaring, 'That what course soever the rest should take, he and his house would serve the Lord;'* and exhorting them to a faithful observance of the laws of God, he invited them to renew their covenant with God. Which having done in very ample and significant terms, he wrote the words of the covenant in the book of the law of God; then setting up a great stone under an oak by the sanctuary of the Lord, he bid the people take notice, that that very stone should be a witness to them, to put them in mind of the covenant which they had made, to prevent them hereafter from denying their God.

Soon after this, Joshua being arrived at the hundred and tenth year of his age, died: and was buried in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, in mount Ephraim; + which city, upon the division unto him, in token of gratitude for the many services and benefits they had received by his administration.

Much about the same time also died Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, whom they buried in a hill, which was given him in mount Ephraim, and which descended to Phinehas his son and successor in the priesthood.

The children of Israel being obliged by oath to carry Joseph's bones into Shechem, they there buried them in a parcel of ground which Jacob had formerly bought of the son of Hamor, the father of Shechem; which parcel of ground afterwards became the inheritance of Joseph's posterity.

CHAPTER IV.

Judah and Simeon are continued by God successors to Joshua in the conduct of the Israelites .- Their success over their enemies. - They are rebuked by an angel for their neglect of the divine command .- Wickedness and punishment of the succeeding generation. -Piety of Micah, in restoring the money which his mother had, through a mistaken zeal, devoted to the Lord,

THE Israelites, 1 mindful of the advice of their deceased leader, awarded by the

^{*} Joshua puts Israel to their choice, whom they would serve, whether the Lord Jehovah, or the idols of the Amorites where they dwelt: and, as a leader in Israel and pattern, he set before them his own choice and the strength of his love to the Lord God of Israel: 'as for him and his house, they would serve the Lord:' a happy and honourat le resolution, not only worthy to be followed by the head and members of every family, but it is their greatest honour and privilege in life.

[†] The mountains of Ephraim were situated in the very centre of the Holy Land, and opposite to the mountains of Judah. The soil of both ridges is fertile, excepting those parts of the mountains of Israel which approach the region of the Jordan, and which are both rugged and difficult of ascent, and also with the exception of the chain extending from the mount of Olives near Jerusalem to the plain of Jericho, which has always afforded lurking places to robbers. The most elevated summit of this ridge, which appears to be the same that was anciently called the Rock of

Rimmon, is at present known by the name of Quarantania. It is described by Maundrell, as situated in a mountainous desert, and being a most miserably dry and barren place, consisting of high rocky mountains, torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion. The mountain on which Timnath-serah was built, was called Gaash. It is generally allowed to have been a barren spot in a barren country. It is probable that Joshua, as he was buried in his own country, had forbidden all funeral pomp, and was privately interred. His tomb, according to Eusebius, was known in his time.

‡ After the death of Joshua, the Israelites were

long without any king or sovereign. Every tribe, being governed by its elders, chose its own commanders for war, and they by degrees subdued the rest of the inhabitants of the country, either destroying or making them tributaries. The neighbouring kings made war on and sometimes subdued them; but God from time to time raised some persons, who delivered them from their oppressions.

dreadful punishments that had been inflicted on the disobedience of their forefathers, presumed not to take any step at this critical juncture, without applying for the divine instruction; therefore as there were still remaining several Canaanitish kings unconquered, and who might be repaired to the oracle at Shiloh to ask direction who should go first up for them to fight the Canaanites?

The Lord gave this first post of honour. to the tribe of Judah, with an assurance of victory. Whereupon they invited the tribe of Simeon, whose lot lay within theirs, to accompany them in this expedition; they promised them, if they would join forces with them now, they would do the like for them afterwards.

Simeon agreed; and taking the field they both attacked the cruel king of Bezek, who having fortified himself in the city, could not long hold out against victorious Israel: but seeing his heartless troops give way, quitted the place and endeavoured by ignoble flight to save his life, but in vain; for the Israelites having taken the town, and put ten thousand of the people to the sword, they pursued Adonibezek* the king; and having taken him they cut off his thumbs and great toes.+

In acknowledgment for which benefit the people appointed them their judges, that is, their supreme magistrates, to administer justice and govern them.

* Adonibezek is literally the 'lord of Bezek.' It is very probable that the different Canaanitish tribes were governed by a sort of chieftains, similar to those among the clans of the ancient Scottish Highlanders. Bezek is said by some to have been in the tribe of Judah. Eusebius and St Jerome mention two villages of this name, not in the tribe of Judah, but about seventeen miles from Shechem. -Dr A. Clarke.

That the cutting off the thumbs and toes of captured enemies was an ancient mode of treating them, we learn from Ælian, Var. Hist. lib. ii. c. 9. who tells us, that the "Athenians, at the instigation of Cleon, son of Cleænatus, made a decree that all the inhabitants of the island of Ægina

should have the thumb cut off from the right hand, so that they might ever after be disabled from holding a spear, yet might handle an oar." It was a custom among those Romans who disliked a

This execution drew from the tyrant an acknowledgment of the justice of God upon him; for he confessed he had cut off the thumbs and great toes of no less than seventy kings, whom, in this mangled condition, he made to gather their meat like dogs under his table.

troublesome to them, they unanimously The old city Jebus, t with its territories, lay in two parts; of which one part fell to the lot of Judah, the other to that of Benjamin.

> Judah soon overrun that part of it that belonged to him; and having put the inhabitants to the sword, set the place on fire. Hither it was they brought the captive king Adonibezek, where he died.

> The next march of the Israelites was against the Canaanites that dwelt to the southward of the mountains, and in the plains; where, having taken Hebron, they marched to attack Debir, which was a part of Caleb's portion, but possessed by the Canaanites.

This being Caleb's property, notwith-

military life to cut off their own thumbs, that they might not be capable of serving in the army. Sometimes the parents cut off the thumbs of their children, that they might not be called into the army. According to Suetonius, a Roman knight, who had cut off the thumbs of his two sons, to prevent them being called to a military life, was, by the order of Augustus, publicly sold both he and his property. Calmet remarks, that the Italian language has preserved a term, poltrone, which signifies one whose thumb is cut off, to designate a soldier destitute of courage. - Horne.

‡ This city and its territories had hitherto been possessed by the Jebusites, who sprung from Jebusi, the third son of Canaan. It is in Judges called Jerusalem, which name it had long after the Israelites had sacked and burnt it; it was rebuilt again, and afterwards made the metropolis of the whole kingdom. We do not read that Jerusalem was ever taken by Joshua, though it seems highly probable, that, when he took the king of Jerusalem, he did to it as he did to the rest of the cities belonging to those kings, Josh. x. 3, 23. But when he was gone to conquer other parts of the country, it is likely that the old inhabitants returned again, and took possession of it, for the land was not then divided among the Israelites. But as Joshua, a little before his death, divided the land, and this city fell, in part, to the share of the tribe of Judah, they dispossessed the Jebusites, that dwelt there, of all but the strong fortress on the top of mount Sion which held out till the days of David .- Patrick's Commentary.

standing his great age, he resolved to | eighty-fifth year, retained his strength storm the place; and to encourage his men the more in this brave attempt, he made proclamation in his camp, that he would give Achsah his daughter to the brave hero who should attack and take the town.*

The hopes of this beautiful prize raised in all the youth a generous emulation, and spurred them on to love and glory. But none came near the brave Othniel,+ whose conquering sword at the head of his party hewed down all before him, and paved the way to victory. In short, he won the place, and with it the fair prize.

Othniel's gallantry being thus nobly rewarded by Caleb, the beauteous Achsah, thinking herself not a sufficient gratuity for the service of her valiant hero, put him upon asking of her father a parcel of land which lay commodiously by their estate.

Othniel, thinking his service already overpaid, seemed backward in the request; therefore Achsah addressing herself to her father Caleb, desired him in general terms to give her a blessing, but more particularly she thus applied to him: 'Thou hast already given me a pleasant estate in the south part of the country; but it is hot and dry, and likely to prove barren; give me, I pray thee, this parcel of land, which is well watered.' Upon which the generous parent granted her request, giving her the upper and lower springs.

Old Caleb, though advanced beyond his

and power both of body and mind, pursued his success with undaunted resolution. and took Hebron, as has been already said, with other places, expelling the gigantic race of Anak; but the inhabitants of the valley kept their ground, being a hardy people, and well provided with ammunition, such as iron chariots, &c.

Those of Joseph's family, who went up against Bethel, did by the assistance of the Lord prevail; for sending out spies to discover the city, they seeing a man come out of it, seized him, and promised him mercy, if he would show them the avenues to it.

The man, to save his life, gave them the best information he could; by which they so well succeeded, that having given notice to the rest of their forces to join them, they entered the town, and put the inhabitants to the sword, except the man who had discovered the entrance, with his family.

The rest of the tribes took possession of the land respectively, and allotted them for an inheritance, but did not destroy the inhabitants, contenting themselves with making them tributary, and suffering them to dwell promiscuously amongst them.

The children of Dan were so unsuccessful against the Amorites, that they were forced to quit the plains, and retire to the mountainous parts of the country, where they were kept penned up for some time.

But the rest of the Israelites, who had been successful against the Canaanites and Amorites, fell into a great error; for, either through lenity or covetousness, not making the right use of their victories, as they were expressly commanded by God, they not only permitted them to live, but encouraged them to trade and deal with them.

This disobedience and neglect of the divine precept, not only proved a snare to them, but likewise incensed God against them, who, to make them sensible of their

therefore called the Kenazite.

^{*} In ancient times fathers assumed an absolute right over their children, especially in disposing of them in marriage; and it was customary for a king or great man to promise his daughter in marriage to him who should take a city, kill an enemy, So Saul promised his daughter in marriage to him who should kill Goliath, I Sam. xvii. 25; and Caleb offers his on this occasion to him who

should take Debir. Profane writers furnish many similar examples.—Dr A. Clarke.

† He was somewhat of kin to Caleb, being, as Tremellius and Junius say, of the posterity of Kenaz; from whom Caleb being descended, was

foly, sent an angel * to remind them of | at Bochim, when they, forsaking the Lord the many favours he had bestowed upon them, in their deliverance out of Egypt, and of their being brought into that good land, and of his faithfulness in keeping his covenant with them, which they had so unfaithfully violated; by which ingratitude they had provoked God to withdraw his help and protection from them.

This severe reprimand so strongly impressed the people with a sense of their sin that they fell into a general weeping, deplored the wretchedness of their condition, and offered sacrifice to the Lord, to appease his wrath, calling the name of the place where they received this reproof, Bochim, which signifies weepings.

+ But scarce were their tears wiped off

* The Jews are generally of opinion, that by this angel we are to understand a prophet, who was sent by God as a messenger, which the word very often imports; and this messenger they commonly take to have been Phinehas, who was employed upon this errand. We can see no reason however for their departing from the usual signification of the word, especially when there is no absurdity in it, and the sense of the context seems to require our retaining it. Nay, there is reason to say, that the person, who here reproves the Israelites, was something more than a created angel; for who but God can speak in this style, 'I made you to go out of Egypt?' No prophet, nor any created angel, durst have been so bold: and therefore, the opinion of most Christian interpreters is, that it was the Son of God, who is frequently in scripture called the 'angel of the cove-nant.' And fit it was for him to appear now, as coming from Gilgal, to put them in mind of his illustrious appearance near that place once before, of the assurance he then gave them of his presence with them in the conquest of the land, and of the solemn-covenant he made with them, by renewing of circumcision. The angel's coming up from Gilgal is therefore mentioned, as a very pertinent circumstance, to upbraid the Israelites with their base ingratitude to God, and with their sloth in not endeavouring to expel the Canaanites.-Patrick's Commentary.

+ Mention was made in Josh. xxiv. 31. that the people of Israel 'served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that out-lived Joshua,' who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he wrought for Israel. But when that generation was dead, and there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim, that is, the less or tutelar gods, so called, of the several nations about them.

God of their fathers, fell into open idolatry, worshipping Baal and Ashtaroth, the

‡ Baal and Ashtaroth are commonly mentioned together; and as it is believed that Ashtaroth denotes the moon, Calmet concludes that Baal represents the sun. The name Baal is used in a generical sense, for the superior god of the Phœgenerical sense, for the superior god of the Fricans, Chaldeans, Moabites, and other people, and is often compounded with the name of some other god; as Baal-Peor, Baal-Zebub, Baal-Gad, Baal-Zephon, Baal-Berith. Baal is the most ancient god of the Canaanites, and perhaps, of the East; and the Hebrews too often imitated the idolatry of the Canaanites, in adoring him. They offered human sacrifices to him, and erected altars to him in groves, on high places, and on the terraces of houses. Baal had priests and prophets consecrated to his service; and many infamous actions were committed in his festivals. Some learned men have maintained, that the Baal of Phœnicia was the Saturn of Greece and Rome: and certainly there was great conformity between their services and sacrifices. Others are of opinion, that Baal was the Phœnician (or Tyrian) Hercules, (an opinion not inconsistent with the other,) but it is generally concluded, that Baal was the sun; and on this admission, all the characters which he assumes in Scripture may be easily explained. The great luminary was adored over all the East. and is the most ancient deity acknowledged among the heathen.—Ashtaroth, or Astarte, was a celebrated Phœnician goddess. In groves, consecrated to her, such obscenities were committed, as rendered her worship infamous. She was goddess of the woods, the celestial goddess, and was also called the "queen of heaven;" and sometimes her worship is described by that of the "host of heaven." She is almost always joined with Baal, and is called gods; Scripture having no particular word for expressing a goddess. Temples of the moon generally accompanied those of the sun; and while bloody sacrifices, or human victims, were offered to Baal, bread, liquors, and perfumes were presented to Astarte; tables were prepared for her on the flat terrace-roofs of houses, near gates, in porches, and at cross-ways, on the first day of every month, which the Greeks called Hecate's supper. Jerome, in several places, translates the name of Astarte by Priapus, as if to denote the licentiousness of her worship. The Eastern people, in many places, worshipped the moon as a god, and represented its figure with a beard, and in armour. The statue in the temple of Heliopolis, in Syria, Pliny says, was that of a woman clothed like a man. Solomon, seduced by his foreign wives, introduced the worship of Astarte into Israel; but Jezebel, daughter of the king of Tyre, and wife of Ahab, principally established her worship. Austin assures us, that the Africans (descendants from the Phoenicians) maintained Astarte to be Juno. But Herodian says, the Carthaginians call the heavenly goddess, the moon, Astroarche. The Phœnicians asserted confidently, says Cicero, that their Astarte was the Syrian Venus, born at Tyre, and wife of Adonis; very different from the Venus of

the Lord, that he often suffered them to be taken and enslaved by their enemies.

But that which brought these calamities upon them, was their favouring those enemies with whom God had forbid all manner of correspondence. For besides that it was expressly forbidden in the law, Joshua, but just before his death, had particularly warned them of the danger they would fall into, if they should entertain any familiarity with those nations that God had doomed to destruction.

And above all things, he laid a most strict charge on them to take care that they did not marry with them, which he knew would naturally lead them to idolatry. Yet, notwithstanding they knew all this, they so far indulged themselves in a loose conversation with the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, that, forgetting the obligation they lay under, they made intermarriages with them; the immediate consequence of which was, that they served their gods.

Such aggravated offences so displeased the most high God, the mighty deliverer of Israel, that he withheld his all-powerful assistance, and behold the consequence: for Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, invading them, made an easy conquest of them, and enslaved them for eight

Cyprus. Lucian, who wrote particularly concerning the goddess of Syria, (Astarte,) says expressly that she is the moon, and no other; and it is indubitable that this luminary was worshipped un-der different names in the East. Astarte was probably the same as the Isis of Egypt, who was represented with the head of an ox, or with horns on her head. But the manner of representing Astarte on medals is not always the same. Sometimes she is in a long habit; at other times, in a short habit; sometimes holding a long stick, with a cross on its top; sometimes she has a crown of rays; sometimes she is crowned with battlements; or by a victory. In a medal of Cæsarea Palestina, she is in a short dress, crowned with battlements, with a man's head in her right hand, and a staff in her left. This is believed to be the man's head mentioned by Lucian, which was every year brought from Egypt to Biblos, a city of Phomicia. Sanchoniathon says, she was represented with a cow's head, the horns describing royalty, and the unar rays .- Calmet.

idols of the heathens; which so provoked | years. During which time of servitude the Israelites coming to a sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions, and crying to the Lord for help, he raised up a deliverer for them. This was the brave Othniel, who, in recompense of his valour, had married Caleb's daughter. This hero, being divinely inspired, * undertook the deliverance of the Israelites, defeated Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; and by this victory over the Syrians, procured to the Israelites a peace of forty years; during which time Othniel governed Israel, and was the first of those we call judges. +

Plenty and ease under the administra-

• All virtuous qualities, whether natural or supernatural, are in the holy scripture called the 'spirit of the Lord.' Thus Bezaleel, in Exodus, is said to be 'filled with the spirit of God,' when he was appointed to build the tabernacle. same is said of Gideon, Samson, Saul, and others.

+ Their dignity was, in some cases, for life, but not always: and their office was not hereditary, neither was their succession constant. There also were anarchies, or intervals of several years' continuance, during which the Israelites groaned un der the tyranny of their oppressors, and had no governors. But though God himself did regularly appoint the judges of the Israelites, the people nevertheless, on some occasions, elected him who appeared to them most proper to deliver them from their immediate oppression; thus Jephthah was chosen by the Israelites beyond Jordan. As, however, it frequently happened that the oppressions which rendered the assistance of judges necessary, were not felt equally over all Israel, so the power of those judges, who were elected in order to procure their deliverance from such servitudes, did not extend over all the people, but only over that district they had delivered. Thus Jephthah did not exercise his authority on this side Jordan, neither did Barak exercise his judicial power beyond that river. The authority of the judges was not inferior to that which was afterwards exercised by the kings: it extended to peace and war. They decided causes without appeal; but they had no power to enact new laws, or to impose new burdens upon the people. They were protectors of the laws, defenders of religion, and avengers of crimes, particularly of idolatry, which was high treason against Jehovah their Sovereign. Further, these judges were without pomp or splendour, and destitute of guards, train, or equipage: unless indeed their own wealth might enable them to make an appearance suitable to their dignity. Their income or revenue arose solely from presents. This form of administration subsisted from Joshua to Saul, during a period of about 339 years .- Horne.

Israel secure and wanton, who ungratefully forgetting the former favours and benefits God had bestowed upon them, lapsed into their former sins of apostasy and corruption in religion; of which the following stories are notorious instances.

HISTORY OF

There was about this time a devout woman of the tribe of Dan, who through a mistaken zeal had dedicated a sum of money to the Lord, and laid it by, intending her son should make with it an idol. Her son, whose name was Micah, finding the money, but not knowing to what use his mother had devoted it, took it for himself. She missing the money, and not suspecting her son, did in his presence curse the sacrilegious thief; which so frighted the son, that he confessed the fact, and restored it to her, being in all eleven hundred shekels of silver.

The mother having received her money again, took two hundred shekels of it, and gave them to a founder to make an idol; which being done, she placed it in the house of her son's god; for he had made a teraphim and an ephod, * and conse-

tion of Othniel, rendered the children of crated one of his sons to be his priest for a while, till he could procure a Levite, which was not long after: for a certain young man, that was a Levite, and had dwelt some time at Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, came in his way to Micah's house in Mount Ephraim.

> Micah, glad of this opportunity, invited the young Levite to dwell with him, and be to him a father+ and a priest, offering him for his wages ten shekels of silver by the year, his diet, and two suits of apparel. one for common wearing, and the other to officiate in.

The Levite liking the terms, closed

got so much money of every one of the lords of the Philistines, thought it expedient to employ some of it in expressing her devotion. But this is an idle conceit, that has no other foundation than Delilah's being mentioned in the foregoing chapter; whereas Micah was some hundred years prior to her. Patrick and Jerieu .- What Micah's intention might be in setting up a teraphim, and other kind of images in his house, commentators are not so well agreed. Those that are willing to apologize for the thing, are ready to say, that, as he lived in a time of great trouble and confusion. wherein the public worship of God was much neglected, if not totally disused, his design was to erect a kind of domestic tabernacle, wherein he might serve God in private, since he could not, without much difficulty, do it in public; and that the sacred habiliments he made, his ephod, his teraphim, &c. were no more than what he had seen at Shiloh: but since the laws of God condemn the making images of any kind, as objects of adoration; the setting up any religious worship, different from what he had established; the offering sacrifices, or performing any public service any where, but in the tabernacle; and the employing any priests in his worship but such as were of the race of Aaron; it is certain that Micah was guilty of a violation of all these prohibitions, and, in the matter of these graven and molten images, cannot be excused from the crime of idolatry. deed, unless he intended to patronize that, what reason could he have to make any innovations in religion, since (according as we date this action) either Phinehas, or Eli were then in the high priest's office, at Shiloh, where the public worship was preserved in all its formality, and from whence Micah, who lived in the mountains of Ephraim, was not so very distant but that he might have gone thither upon all solemn occasions.-Stack-

† The priest was called a spiritual father to the laity, as having care of their souls, and charge of the holy things. Thus are preceptors called fathers to their pupils, senators fathers to the citi-zens, princes fathers of their countries, &c.

^{*} That the divine service might be performed with a greater resemblance of what was done at the tabernacle in Shiloh, he made priestly ornaments; for so some learned men take the ephod to comprehend, not only the breast-plate adjoining to it, but all the rest of the vestments used by the high-priest. His intention was to set up an oracle in his own house, in imitation of the sanctuary of Moses; and therefore, to make the conformity the greater, it is supposed that he erected a kind of ark, whereon he placed his two teraphim, to answer the two cherubim in the tabernacle, as he caused the priest who officiated for him to wear an ephod, in the manner that the high-priest did, when he consulted God. Mr Selden well observes, that the worship of the true God, and of idols, was here blended together. The ephod and the Levite, which Mich afterwards provided, were intended, no doubt, for the service of the true God, but the graven image and teraphim, by which the children of Dan desired the Levite to inquire of God, belonged unto demons. They neither trusted to the ephod alone, which related to God, nor to their teraphim alone, which was their own invention, but thought it necessary to join both together in divine worship: and thus began idolatry in Israel by the superstition of an old woman, who put this in her son's head. This woman many of the Jews suppose to be the same with Delilah, who, having

On the other hand, Micah was as much pleased in the hopes and confidence that the Lord would prosper him, because he had gotten a Levite* to be his priest.

CHAPTER V.

The Danites send out a detachment in quest of an inheritance. - They take possession of Laish.—Are guilty of idolatry.—Judgment inflicted on the Levite's concubine.—Method of resentment shown by the Levite for the inhospitable treatment he had received .- He represents his wrongs in an assembly of the people .- Their decree in consequence of the same .- The Benjamites are examined concerning the outrage. Withstand the Israelites some time, but are at length destroyed.

ABOUT the same time, some of the tribe of Dan finding the lot, which fell to them upon the division of the land in Joshua's time, (see Josh. xix. 47.) too little for them, and they not enjoying all that neither (for the Amorites, as has been already said, would not suffer them to possess the valley, which was the best and richest part, but forced them up into the mountains), they were fain to seek out more room to enlarge their quarters. Whereupon, choosing out five men of courage, they sent them to take a view of the country. These spies in their travels came to Micah's house, where they were entertained; and knowing the young Levite by his voice, they asked him how he came thither, and what business he had there?

He told them what agreement Micah had made with him, and that he was Micah's priest.

When they heard this, they desired him to ask counsel of God, that they might know whether their journey would be prosperous or no?

With this encouragement they went on till they came to Laish; where, observing

with Micah, and became one of his family. the people lived very secure and careless, without any sort of discipline and government, they concluded it would be no difficult matter to conquer them, and take possession of the place. And with this report they returned to their friends, giving them an account that the land abounded with all necessaries of life.

> Availing themselves of the undisciplined state of these people, the tribe of Dan armed a party of six hundred men, and sent them to take possession of the city of Laish.

> These marching through Mount Ephraim, came in their way to Micah's house; where, making a halt, the five spies, who were guides to this party, and had been there before, acquainted the rest that there were in that house an ephod and teraphim, and a graven and molten image, desiring them to consider whether they had best tarry there, to ask counsel of the Lord concerning the success of their enterprise, or take the ephod and images with them, to consult upon all occasions?

> The last seemed most expedient; for the five spies that were the guides, leaving the party at the gates, went into the house. Micah being from home, they saluted the Levite, whom they sent to the gate to talk with the Danites; and whilst they entertained him without, the guides, having been there before, and knowing the rooms of the house, plundered it of the ephod, the teraphim, and other images, and brought them to their brethren at the gate.

> The priest seeing this, was amazed at the boldness of the attempt; and asked them what they meant by it? They bid him be silent, and consider, whether it were better for him to be a priest to a single family, or a whole tribe in Israel?

> This advantageous offer soon gained the young priest to their side, who joined with them, and went off with the plunder.

> Micah, incensed and alarmed at the loss of his priest and gods, gathered as many friends as he could, and pursued the Dan-

^{*} Who this young Levite was, is hard to say. He is called Jonathan, the son of Sershom, of the tribe of Manasseh.

ites. But they were a long way from his house before he could overtake them: at length, coming within view of them, some of the Danite soldiers in the rear heard them make an outcry; and facing about, asked Micah why he made such an outcry. He told them they had robbed him. Upon which the Danites advised him to be silent: for if they provoked the rest of the party, it would cost them their lives. Micah finding himself over-matched, was forced to put up with the wrong, and returned home without either gods or priest.

Having thus affrighted Micah's party from the pursuit, the Danites continued their march unmolested, and speedily arrived at Laish, and finding the people quiet and secure, they set the city on fire, and surprising the inhabitants, who were busy in putting out the fire, they put them all to the sword. Afterwards, rebuilding the city, they called it Dan, after the name of their father; and settling there, they set up Micah's graven image which they had stolen from him; * and making the young Levite Jonathan their priest, he and his sons continued to officiate as priests to the tribe of Dan all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh, until the captivity of the land, which is reckoned to be till the ark in Eli's time was taken by the Philistines, about three hundred years after this.

From this instance, it appears the depravity of the Israelites in point of religious principles was as notorious as their dissoluteness of morals; and that their morals were loose in the extreme, is wofully evinced by the transaction which follows.

A Levite that dwelt on the side of mount Ephraim having taken a wife out of Bethlehem-Judah, she proved a lewd woman,† and either through fear or shame left her husband, and ran home to her father at Bethlehem-Judah, where she tarried four months. In which time her husband having somewhat digested the injury, went at the four months' end to her father's, with an intent to be reconciled to her, and bring her home with him; in order to which he took with him a servant and a couple of asses.

Being arrived at her father's house, he was received with great joy, and entertained for three days. At the importunity of the father, he stayed the fourth day, and was kept till the afternoon of the next day; but the Levite resolving to be gone, took his leave, and set out with his wife and servant.

By the time they were got as far as Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant, fearing to be benighted, desired his master to put in there. But the place not being fully possessed and inhabited by Israelites, he endeavoured to reach Gibeah,‡ whither they arrived at sun-set;

‡ Gibeah lay north of Jerusalem, about twenty or thirty furlongs from it, and was built upon a

hill, as its name imports. - Wells.

^{*} Now the wildfire of idolatry, which was confined before to the private hall of Micah, flew furiously through all the tribe of Dan, who, like to thieves that have carried away contagious clothes, have insensibly infected themselves and their posterity to death. Heresy and superstition have small beginnings, dangerous proceedings, pernicious conclusions. This contagion is like a canker: at first it is scarcely visible, afterwards it eats away the flesh and consumes the body.—Bp. Hall.

[†] Josephus relates this story with a good deal of variation from the sacred history. He tells us, that the Levite's wife was not a lewd woman, but one who did not well agree with her husband, for which reason she left him and went to her father; that the young men of Gibeah, seeing her to be a very beautiful woman, took notice of the house where she went in, and came and demanded her, and not the Levite himself as the scripture has it; that the Levite did not turn her out, but that the young men took her by force, and carried her to their own quarters, where they spent the whole night in all manner of bestial liberties, and then sent her back again next morning; that, upon her return, she fell into such a confusion of thought, for what had befallen her that night, that (what between shame and indignation) she sunk down upon the ground, and expired; that the Israelites, met in convention, sent to the Benjamites to deliver up the malefactors who had committed this brutal violence upon the Levite's wife, which they refused to do, as thinking it dishonourable for fear of a war to submit to rules of other people's prescribing, &c.—Josephus, book v. c. 2.

‡ Gibeah lay north of Jerusalem, about twenty

and sitting down in the street, as the custom of travellers then was, they waited to see who would invite them to a lodging.* from his work out of the field, and seeing strangers sitting in the street, went up and saluted them, and asked whence they

After long waiting, an old man coming

* In the East, anciently, as well as in modern times, there were no inns, in which the traveller could meet with refreshment. Shade from the sun and protection from the plunderers of the night, is all that the caravansaries afford. Hence hospitality was deemed a sacred duty incumbent upon every one. The sacred writings exhibit several instances of hospitality exercised by the patriarchs, and the writings of modern travellers show that similar hospitality still exists in the East. Thus De la Roque says, "We did not arrive at the foot of the mountain till after sunset: and it was almost night when we entered the plain; but as it was full of villages, mostly inhabited by Maronites, we entered into the first we came to, to pass the night there. It was the priest of the place, who wished to receive us; he gave us a supper under the trees, before his little dwelling. As we were at table, there came by a stranger, wearing a white turban, who, after having saluted the company, sat himself down to the table, without ceremony; ate with us during some time, and then went away, repeating several times the name of God. They told us it was some traveller who, no doubt, stood in need of refreshment, and who had profited by the opportunity, according to the custom of the East, which is to exercise hospitality at all times, and toward all persons." There is something very pleasing in Niebuhr's description of this custom: "The hospitality of the Arabs has always been the subject of praise; and I believe that those of the present day exercise this virtue no less than their ancestors did. It is true that in this country, as in Europe, if a stranger is not known, no one will entreat him to come in. Nevertheless, there are in the villages of the Tehama houses which are public; where travellers may lodge and be entertained some days gratis, if they will be content with the fare: they are very much frequented. We ourselves were during two hours in one of these inns, in the village of Menejze, in going from Loheia to Beit-el-fakih: my servants, my camels, my asses, and all my company received shelter. The Sheik of the village to whom this inn belonged was not satisfied with visiting us, and offering us a better fare than others; he also entreated us to stop the night with him. In another journey from Beit-el-fakih to Takaite, in company with a fakih, or man of letters, of Arabia, although my fakih had no acquaintance with the Sheik, yet as a stranger he paid him his respects; hardly was he returned, when the Sheik came himself to invite us to lodge with him; -which we declining -he sent us a good supper, which came extremely à-propos. When the Arabs are at table, they invite those who happen to come, to eat with them, whether they be Christians or Mahometans, gentle or simple. In the caravans I have often seen with pleasure a mule-driver press those who passed to partake of his repast, and though the

from his work out of the field, and seeing strangers sitting in the street, went up and saluted them, and asked whence they came, and whither they were travelling? The Levite told him, and complained of the incivility of the people, none having invited him to a lodging, though he had his own provisions with him.

The hospitable old man, who was of mount Ephraim, though he dwelt at Gibeah, courteously invited them to lodge in his house, where he entertained them very frankly.

Whilst they were at supper, the men of the city, having observed where they went in, came to the house, and knocking with great violence at the door, demanded the master of the house to deliver the man that came in there, that they might know him.+

The good old man, to prevent danger to his guests, ventured amongst the tumultuous rabble to appease them, offering them his only daughter, who was a virgin, and the Levite's concubine,‡ to use at

majority politely excused themselves, he gave, with an air of satisfaction, to those who would accept of them, a portion of his little meal of bread and dates; and I was not a little surprised when I saw in Turkey, rich Turks withdraw themselves into corners to avoid inviting those who might otherwise have sat at table with them." Mr Buckingham has described an interesting trait of oriental hospitality in an Arab Sheik of Barak, the chief of a Turcoman tribe dwelling in the vicinity of Aleppo, on the plain of Barak; "When we alighted at his tent-door, our horses were taken from us by his son, a young man well dressed in a scarlet cloth benish and a shawl of silk for a turban. The Sheik, his father, was sitting beneath the awning in front of the tent itself; and when we entered, rose up to receive us, exchanging the salute of welcome, and not seating himself until all his guests were accommodated."—" Soon afterwards, warm cakes prepared on the hearth, cream, honey, dried raisins, butter, lebben, and wheat boiled in milk, were served to the company. Neither the Sheik himself nor any of his family partook with us, but stood around, to wait upon their guests."

+ Just as the Sodomites offered to Lot, demanding to have the Levite delivered to them, that they might abuse him in that unnatural way called So-

‡ She is sometimes called wife, but oftener concubine. offer any violence to his guest.

This would not do; whereupon the Levite, seeing them so outrageous, to save himself, turned his concubine out amongst them, who abused her all night, not letting her go till the break of day. And when she returned to the house where her lord lay, fell down dead at the door, her hands lying upon the threshold.

The Levite opening the door, and seeand therefore bid her get up, that they might be going. But when he perceived she was dead, he took her up; and making no complaint there, laid her upon one of the asses, and hastened home as fast as he could.

He having now time to meditate a revenge suitable to the affront, which he in this horrid manner expressed; he divided the dead concubine into twelve pieces,* and sent to every tribe a piece, through the whole coasts of Israel, with an account of the barbarous and inhospitable treatment he had met with at Gibeah; that so the whole family of Israel in general, being made sensible of the wrong done him and his concubine, might join in revenging it.

This procedure of the Levite is indeed shocking to humanity, though it tended to show his strong sense of the injury and disgrace he had sustained, as well as impress deep convictions of their guilt upon the Israelites, who upon sight of each piece of the divided concubine, did unanimously agree, that there never was such

ing her lie there, concluded she was asleep,

. The ancients had several ways of uniting themselves together in strict ties, which lasted for a stipulated time: amongst these it was very common to sacrifice a bullock or other animal, and to distribute the pieces of the body to different persons; who hereby entered into a strict engagement to espouse the interests of the persons concerned. The conduct of the Levite on this occasion seems to have had a reference to this established usage; and to have been intended to bind the several tribes by an indissoluble engagement, to see justice done him for the injury he had received .-

Burder

their pleasure, provided they would not a deed done or seen since the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt.

> And to acquit themselves of the guilt of so wicked a fact, the whole congregation of Israel met at Mizpeh, † that they might there examine the business before the Lord; where demanding of the Levite an account of the whole matter, he thus in short summed it up to them: 'I came with my concubine to Gibeah, which belonged to Benjamin, to lodge: but the men of Gibeah beset the house where I was, with a design to murder me; and my concubine they have forced, that she is dead; by which they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Whereupon I took my concubine home, and having cut her into pieces, I sent her throughout all the inheritance of Israel. Now ye, being sons of Israel, are concerned in this abuse as well as I. Therefore consider, and advise what is to be done.'

> When the people had received this account of the matter, they were highly incensed against the men of Gibeah, and resolved not to return to their houses till they had brought the offenders to condign punishment. And that they might lose no time, agreed to draw ten men out of every hundred, an hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand, who should be employed to furnish the army with provisions, and other necessaries.

> On cool deliberation it was resolved by messengers, to demand of the Benjamites the delivery of the persons guilty of this

⁺ This city was situated on the confines of Judah and Benjamin, and is sometimes attributed to the one, sometimes to the other. It seems that there was a place here in which the Lord was consulted, as well as at Shiloh; in 1 Mac. iii. 46. we read, 'In Maspha was the place where they prayed aforetime in Israel.' These two passages cast light on each other. Some think that Shiloh is meant, because the ark was there; but the phrase 'before the Lord' may signify no more than meeting in the name of God to consult him, and make prayer and supplication. Wherever God's people are, there is God himself; and it ever was true, that wherever two or three were assembled in his name, he was in the midst of them .- Dr A. Clarke.

breach of justice, in order that they might be brought to condign punishment.

But the Benjamites, in contempt of their brethren, the Israelites, resolved to stand by the offenders, and mustered up all their force to defend them.

The Israelitish army consisted of four hundred thousand able men: that of Benjamin but six and twenty thousand;—a great disparity, and which showed the latter desperate.

The Israelites, over-confident of their strength, and despising the Benjamites, who were so few, depending on the justice of their cause, never went to ask counsel of God (as in such emergencies they usually did) whether they should go to war with their brethren or no; but taking for granted their right, to prevent any difference that might arise among the tribes about precedence in this expedition, they went up to the house of God only to know which tribe should lead the van, and the lot fell to Judah.*

Upon this, the Israelitisharmy advanced, and sat down before Gibeah; from whence the Benjamites made a brisk sally, cut off two and twenty thousand of them, and retreated to the town with very little loss. This unexpected disaster made the Israelites sensible of their neglect, in not inquiring of the Lord whether they ought to have undertaken this war, or no. Wherefore, bewailing their misfortune in the last action, they ask counsel of the Lord, (but in an irregular manner,) who, to punish them for their presumption, bid them go, but promised them no success.

The heedless Israelites, taking this for an assurance of victory, drew up their army again before Gibeah, offering the Benjamites battle: who being flushed with their former success made another bold sally, and cut off eighteen thousand more of the Israelites.

The second defeat brought the Israelites to a sense of their former presumption and neglect: wherefore, going up to the house of the Lord, they humbled themselves with weeping and fasting that day, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.

And having thus regularly proceeded in their humiliation, they again inquired of the Lord whether they should attack the Benjamites, or forbear; for at this time the ark of the covenant of God was in Shiloh, and Phinehas was priest. † And now the Lord, having sufficiently corrected the confidence of the Israelites, not only gave them commission to go against the Benjamites, but assured them of victory.

Being thus promised the assistance of an Almighty arm, and encouraged from the divine assurance of success, the Israel-

^{*} The consulting of the divine oracle, especially in matters of war, was accounted so very necessary, in order to obtain success, that some commentators have esteemed this the only reason why the Israelites, in so just a cause as punishing the Benjamites for their unheard-of wickednesses, were in two several battles defeated; even because they did not previously apply to God, as they should have done. They sent up indeed to the house of the Lord, and asked counsel of him, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? that is, which of their tribes should have the honour or hazard of making the first attack : but it is observable, that they had come to a full resolution of making war against the Benjamites, and to that purpose had made draughts of the men that were to be employed in it, without ever consulting God, whether an enterprise of this nature, wherein there was likely to be such an effusion of the blood of their brethren, would be pleasing to him or no. The truth is, they never questioned his approbation of what they accounted so laudable: they presumed upon his protection and assistance; and the vast superiority of their forces made them confident of success. But now, in a matter of such moment as this, to overlook the divine oracle, and be determined by their own counsels only, and to march against one of their own tribes, with a full purpose of destroying them utterly, before they knew any thing whether God had decreed their destruction, or no, was not only an instance of their rashness and presumption, but an act likewise of rebellion

against the Majesty of God, who was the king of Israel, and upon that account alone, had right to declare, whether they were to wage war against their brethren the Benjamites, or no.—Stackhouse.

[†] This passage in Judges (rejecting that abhinical dream, that Phinehas lived three hundred years) shows plainly, that this story was transacted early in the times of the Judges.

Benjamites; and to make their victory more secure, they laid an ambuscade in the meadows behind Gibeah, that when the fight was begun, the Israelites by a feigned flight drawing the Benjamites from the city, those that lay in ambuscade should seize the city, and set it on fire, as a signal to the main body of the Israelitish army to rally and renew the fight.

Having thus concerted the necessary military operations, ten thousand chosen troops of the Israelites appeared before Gibeah; which the Benjamites seeing, sallied out of the town, and falling briskly upon them, killed about thirty of them. The Israelites then retiring, as if they were afraid, pretended to fly; and the Benjamites, supposing the day was their own, eagerly pursued them so far, that they were at a distance from the town sufficient to give the ambuscade an opportunity to seize the place, and set it on fire. The main body of the Israelitish army seeing this, faced about, and charged furiously upon the Benjamites, who began to think of retreating to their city; but when by the smoke and flame they saw themselves circumvented, they took to the wilderness, thinking to screen themselves there; but in vain: for being inclosed by the main army and the ambuscade, they were easily trodden down.

In this action and the pursuit, five and twenty thousand one hundred of the Benjamites were slain; and a thousand more having been destroyed in other actions, there remained but six hundred men of the Benjamites, who fled to the rock Rimmon, and hid themselves there; all the rest of that tribe, together with their *towns and cattle, suffered military execution.

The heat of this action being over, the Israelites began to consider how low a condition they had reduced the tribe of Benjamin to by this general slaughter, which afflicted them very much. And the rather, because upon the first engag-

ites prepared a third time to attack the ing in this quarrel, they had rashly sworn, that no Israelite should give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite. *

Upon this they repaired to the tabernacle where the ark was, and mourned all day, saying, 'O Lord, why is this come to pass, that there should this day be one tribe wanting in Israel?'

Then getting up early the next morning, they built an altar there, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings unto the Lord. After which, applying themselves to find out some expedient to elude their rash oath and save the sinking tribe, they recollected that they had at first bound themselves by oath to put to death all those who should not appear with them at Mizpeh, and join in the common cause against the Benjamites.

Upon inquiry they found, that none came from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly of the camp. Therefore sending twelve thousand of their best men to Jabeshgilead, they commanded them to put man, woman, and child, to the sword+, ex-

^{*} Whether this oath, against contracting any affinity with the Benjamites, was in itself lawful and obligatory, or no, some interpreters, without any manner of reason, as I think, have disputed, For whatever was attended with such pernicious consequences, as to oblige their brethren, either to live unmarried, which would prove the extinc-tion of their tribe, or to marry the daughters of heathens, which was contrary to their divine law, or to take to themselves wives wherever they could find them by force and violence, which was contrary to the universal law of nations: whatever, I say, was attended with such evil consequences as these, could not be lawful in itself, nor of any obligation to the consciences of those that made it; and therefore it is somewhat wonderful, how the Israelites, when they found themselves involved in such difficulties, (as they themselves testify) that, for the preservation of this their oath, they were forced to have recourse to acts of the utmost cruelty and violence, did not perceive the illegality of it, and themselves, consequently, absolved from its observation .- Stackhouse.

[†] It is no part of our business to apologize for actions that in themselves are abominable, and will admit of no excuse. The whole account of this transaction is dreadful; and none could have been guilty of all these enormities but those who were abandoned of God. The crime of the men of Gibeah was of the deepest dye; the punishment, involving both the guilty and the innocent, was extended to the most criminal excess; and their

cept such marriageable young women as were virgins, whom they were to bring with them to the camp.

These troops, having done execution on Jabesh-gilead, as they were commanded, brought away with them four hundred virgins to the Israelites; who immediately sent heralds to the rock Rimmon to treat with the few remaining Benjamites, offering them peace, and inviting them to return.

The poor Benjamites gladly embraced the offer; and coming to the camp, the Israelites bestowed on them the Gileadite virgins for wives. But the Benjamites, being six hundred in number, there was not for every man one. Upon which they bethought them of another expedient to supply this deficiency.

Once a year there was a solemn feast held at Shiloh,* to which the young mai-

mode of redressing the evil which they had occasioned was equally detestable. The massacre of the people of Jabesh-gilead, without ever sending to know the reason of their absenting themselves from the war, was a cruel expedient to extricate the Israelites from a difficulty, in which their superstitious observance of an unlawful oath had involved them; and a sad instance it is of the iniquity and barbarity of these times; for, how severe soever the laws of military discipline may be, or with what justice soever recusants, as well as deserters in war may be deemed guilty, and the Jabeshites be called public enemies, because they did not obey the order of the whole congregation, and by refusing to join with them against the Benjamites, made themselves partakers of their crimes; yet, certainly, to slay the innocent with the guilty, and to put women and children to death, who were never made to bear arms, was the very height of injustice and barbarity.- Stackhouse.

* All the three great festivals were to be observed in the place where God settled his habitation, which was now at Shiloh; and therefore, some are of opinion, that the feast, here mentioned, was one of these; particularly, they think it was the feast of tabernacles, because this was a season of great joy for having newly gathered their vintage, and the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance. At this time they dwelt in booths too, behind which the Benjamites (as they fancy) might very conveniently conceal themselves, and so watch an opportunity of carrying away the virgins: but what seems to make against this opinion is, that at any of these public festivals, the concourse of people would have been too great for a design of this nature to be put in execution, since the violence, which must

dens of Shiloh used to come and dance there. The Israelites therefore directed the Benjamites, that wanted wives, to lie in wait in the vineyards, at the time of the feast, and when they should see the Shiloh damsels come to dance, they should seize every man one for his wife, and carry them away into their own country;

of course have been offered to the young women, would hardly have met with a general connivance. It is much more probable therefore, that this was some festival peculiar to the people of Shiloh, which the Benjamites perhaps might know nothing of, and were therefore put in mind of it by the elders of the congregation. Josephus tells us, that it was celebrated thrice every year; and on this festival it might be a custom for the young women to go out into the fields, and there dance by themselves, which might give their ravishers the very opportunity they wanted.—Le Clerc's Commentary.

† The public necessity is the only good reason that can be given for this act of violence on the virgins of Shiloh. For, whatever may be said in vindication of the Benjamites, viz, that what they put in execution was by order and advice of their superiors, and that their intent in doing it was just and honest, and devoid of that brutal lust, which is incident to common ravishers; whatever may be said in excuse of these, the elders of Israel, who gave them this counsel and authority, had certainly no right to dispose of other people's children without their parents' consent and appro-bation. The rape of the Sabine virgins is usually produced as a piece of history parallel to this; but Romulus, in whose reign it happened, was one of those princes who accounted every point that contributed to the establishment of his do-minion, not only lawful, but glorious, and that every thing ceased to be a crime when once it became necessary for recsons of state: but the rulers of Israel either had, or should have had different notions. They were governed by God, 'whose throne is established in righteousness,' and should therefore, one would think, have contrived some other means of re-establishing a diminished tribe, than those violent ways of rapes and forced marriages. But the sacred historian has assigned a reason for these unrighteous proceedings, when (in four different places in the book of Judges) he tells us, that 'in those days there was no king in Israel; and for want of such a supreme authority, every tribe, and every city, nay, which is more, every private man committed many horrid things, which were not publicly allowed. This was the cause of Micah's idolatry, as we noted before; of the Benjamites' filthiness and abominable lusts: and of all the enormous things done by the main body of the Israelites; their killing all the Benjamites without distinction; their binding themselves by rash and unlawful oaths; their killing all the women of Jabesh-gilead, who were not virgins; and here, their permitting, nay, their ordering this rape for the preservation of a rash and unjustifiable oath: and this should teach us, to be very thankpromising them, that if any of the relations of the damsels should complain, they would screen them from danger.

The Benjamites pursued their instructions; and watching their opportunity, took every one his damsel, and carried them off to their own inheritance; where, repairing their cities, they settled again, and in time recruited their tribe.

ful for the authority that is set over us, in order to preserve us from the commissions of such like enormities; for which end, the custom was, among the ancient Persians, (as Usher observes) to let the people loose to do even what they listed, for five days after the king died; that by the disorders, which were then committed, they might see the necessity of having a king to govern them, and when one was settled in the throne, the great rea-

son of being obedient to him.

The rape of the Sabine virgins to which that of the virgins of Shiloh has been compared, is thus related by Dionysius Halicarnassus:- "Romulus, perceiving that his new city was surrounded by several very powerful and warlike nations, who bore them no good-will, formed a design to make them his friends, by contracting marriages with them: but considering with himself, that these neighbouring nations would hardly enter into that affinity with a people, as yet famous neither for their riches nor great exploits, without being in some measure compelled into it; he was resolved to put in practice the stratagem of his uncle Numitor, and to enter into this alliance with them by carrying off their daughters. This design he communicated to the senate; and having obtained their approbation of it, he proclaimed a public feast to be celebrated in honour of Neptune, and invited all the neighbouring cities to the many diversions and spectacles which he then intended to exhibit. Crowds of people, with their wives and children, flocked to the feast; but on the last day, when it began to draw to a conclusion, Romulus ordered all the young men, that upon a signal given, they should seize and carry off every one a virgin, keep them all night, without offering any rudeness to them, and bring them the next morning before him. The young men took care to execute his orders: for, dispersing themselves into small companies, as soon as they saw the sign, they seized on the damsels, who, upon this occasion, made a hideous outcry, as expecting much worse usage than they met with. The next day, when they were brought before Romulus, he spoke very courteously to them, and told them, that it was to do them no dishonour, but merely to procure them husbands, that he ordered that rape, which was an ancient custom derived from the Greeks, and the most noble and gallant manner of contracting marriage. He therefore entreated them to be well affected towards those husbands which fortune had given them; and so, distributing the young women, which were six hundred and eighty three, among an equal number of unmarried men, he dismissed them."-Stackhouse.

CHAPTER VI.

The Israelites are again punished for their impiety.-Delivered from their enemies on their repentance and submission .- Deborah and Barak espouse their cause. - Various instances of the revolt of Israel, and their consequent punishment, -- Together with the interposition of providence in their behalf, on their return to the Lord.

THESE civil and intestine quarrels among the tribes, being thus reconciled, the Israelites did not long enjoy peace; for continuing to provoke God by their profaneness and irregularities, he again chastised them by their enemies. The most powerful of whom was Eglon, king of Him God raised up to be a scourge, who otherwise had neither strength nor courage to attack Israel.

But being designed by the Almighty to be the instrument of his vengeance. Eglon armed the Ammonites and Amalekites, and fell upon the Israelites, whom he defeated, and possessed himself of the city of Palm-trees.*

And as an aggravation of their offence, in so suddenly transgressing, after their late deliverance from bondage, God enlarged their punishment, for their servitude was now advanced from eight years to eighteen, which was the space of time they served Moab.

But when the Israelites, through a sense of their misery, addressed themselves to their God, he raised them another deliverer in the person of Ehud, the son of Gera, a left-handed man, by reason of a lameness in his right hand.

Ehud was a wise and politic man, and having observed the weakness of the Israelites by their eighteen years' slavery, and the low condition of the Benjamites, that they were not able by open war to

^{*} Calmet supposes that the 'city of palm-trees' means Engedi; but it seems rather to have been a city in the vicinity, or plain of Jericho, which the king of Moab had seized as a frontier town, contiguous to his own estates; for Jericho, before its destruction by Joshua, was expressly called the 'city of palm-trees.'

attempt any thing against their oppressors, he had delivered the present, and dismisshe contrived first to take off Eglon privately, knowing it would be much easier to deal with the Moabites, when they should be in confusion for want of a leader, than while they had their king at the head of them.

To carry on this the more plausibly, he repaired to the Moabitish court, where, under pretence of delivering a present to the king from his servants the children of Israel, he was admitted into the king's presence, who was at that time airing himself in his summer parlour.* When

* Besides the platforms, says Dr Shaw, which were upon the ancient houses of the East, and which are found there to this day, it is probable that heretofore, as well as at present, most of the great houses had a smaller one annexed, which seldom consisted of more than one or two rooms and a terrace. Others, built as they frequently are above the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground-floor, all the conveniences belonging to the house, properly so called. There is a door of communication from them into the gallery of the house, kept open or shut at the discretion of the master of the house, besides another door which opens immediately from a privy stair down into the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. In these back houses strangers are usually lodged and entertained; hither the men are wont to retire from the hurry and noise of their families, to be more at leisure for meditation or diversions: and they are often used for wardrobes and magazines. These the Arabs call oleah, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word אלית aliyath found in this place; and without doubt such was the apartment in which Eglon received Ehud, by the privy stairs belonging to which he escaped, after having killed Eglon. The doors of the eastern buildings are large, and their chambers spacious, conveniences well adapted to those hotter climates: but in the present passage something more seems to be meant; at least there are now other conveniences in the East to give coolness to particular rooms, which are very common. In Egypt the cooling their rooms is effected by openings at the top, which let in the fresh air. Mons. Maillet informs us that their halls are made very large and lofty, with a dome at the top, which towards the north has several open windows, so constructed as to throw the north wind down into the rooms; and by this means, though the country is excessively hot, they can make the coolness of those apartments so great, as often not to be borne without being wrapped in furs. Eglon's was a chamber; and some contrivance to mitigate the heat of it was the more necessary, as he appears to have kept his court at Jericho, where the heat is so excessive as sometimes to prove fatal.—Dr A. Clarke.

ed his servants that brought it, he, returning to the king, told him he had a private message to him.

The king bid him be silent till the company were gone; who being withdrawn, Ehud approached, and told the king he had a message to him from God.

At that word Eglon, in reverence to the name of God, arose from his seat, which Ehud taking the advantage of, stabbed him in the belly with a dagger, which he had concealed under his clothes, so forcibly, that he thrust the dagger, haft and all, into his belly; and the king being a very fat man, the fat of his belly closed over the dagger, so that he could not draw it out.

Ehud seeing him dead left him wallowing in his blood, and shutting the door after him made the best of his way home.+

⁺ Whether it be lawful, according to the right of nature and nations, for subjects to rescue themselves from tyranny by taking away the life of the tyrant, and to recover their country, which has been unjustly taken from them, by destroying the usurper, is a question that has been much debated, and what at present we need not enter into, for the vindication of Ehud's fact. It is the observation of the learned Grotius, that the authority of the king of Moab was never legitimized by any convention of the Israelites, and, consequently, that they were at liberty to shake off his yoke, whenever they found a convenient opportunity. The only difficulty is, whether a private man might make himself an instrument in effecting this, in the manner that Ehud did? But to this it is replied, that Ehud was no private man, but acted by a warrant and authority from God: and to this purpose the history acquaints us, that 'when Ehud had made an end of offering the present, which the Israelites sent to Eglon,' he was upon his return home, and 'had gone as far as the quarries, which were by Gilgal.' The word pesil, which is here rendered quarries, most commonly signifies, as indeed it is in the marginal note, as well as the Septuagint and Vulgate, graven images, which it is not improbable the Moabites had set up in this place, rather than any other, in pure contempt of the God of Israel, who had for so long a time made Gilgal famous by his presence in the tabernacle, while it stood there. These images, when Ehud beheld them, his spirit was stirred with a just indignation within him; and therefore proceeding no farther in his journey home, he dismissed his attendants, and went himself back, with a resolution to revenge this affront to God as well as the oppression of his people. That this his return was directed by a divine impulse and instigation, is

the ground.

fair opportunity to escape; which he im- of eight years. proved by his speed; and coming to In which time of liberty and ease, they mount Ephraim, he blew a trumpet, at grew wanton and forgetful of their former which signal the Israelites flocked to him, servitude; which neglect and ingratitude to whom he related what he had done, and of theirs provoked God to raise up other bid them follow him; for God, said he, instruments for their correction; the chief hath delivered your enemies the Moabites of which was Jabin, who, assuming to into your hands.

They readily obeyed him as their reigned in Hazor.+ leader, and securing the fords of Moab towards Jordan, suffered not a man to pass over; but falling courageously upon the Moabites, whilst they were in that consternation for the death of their king, and want of a leader, they slew about ten thousand of the chief of them, at the same time delivering Israel and subduing Moab.

evident, I think, from the hazard of the enterprise he was going upon, and the many favourable occasions that accompanied the execution of it. For, how could any man in his senses think that a single person, as he was, should ever be able to compass the death of a king, amidst the circle of his guards and attendants? How could he expect that an enemy, as he was, should be admitted to a private audience? or that, if he should prove so lucky, the king should be so far infatuated, as to order all the company to quit the room? The killing the king must have been a great difficulty under these circumstances; but then his making his escape had all the signs of an impossibility in it: and yet, without his escaping, the design of delivering his country must have been abortive. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that nothing but a divine instinct could have given him courage to set about the thing; and therefore it was not all fallacy when he told Eglon that 'he had a message from God unto him,' because God had sent and commissioned him to kill him: so that, what he did in this case, he did not of himself, or from his own mere motion, but by virtue of an order which he had received from God, who had destinated this oppressor of his people to this untimely kind of death .- Stackhouse.

After the departure of Ehud, the serv- | Ehud deceased, the God of Israel raisants of Eglon returned on their duty to ed his chosen people another deliverer, in the king, but finding the door locked they the person of Shamgar, the son of Anath, supposed he had a mind to retire, and a strong and valiant man; who, when the therefore withdrew; but after long wait- Philistines in another quarter invaded ing, and finding the door still shut, they Israel, with no better weapon than an took a key and opened it, and to their ox-goad,* slew six hundred of them great surprise found their king dead upon and delivered Israel from all dangerous neighbours, that were borderers on that This long delay of theirs gave Ehud a side. After which Israel enjoyed a peace

himself the title of the king of Canaan,

* The goad of Palestine is of enormous size, and well calculated for a military offensive weapon, according to the description of the intelligent Maundrell, who observes in his diary, "At Kane Leban, a place about a day's journey from Jerusalem, the country people were, at the time when It was there, ploughing every where in the fields. It was observable, that in ploughing they used goads of an extraordinary size: I found some of them, on measuring, to be eight feet long, and at the bigger end six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen; and, at the other end, with a small spade or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay which encumbers it in working. May we not hence conjecture, that it was with such a goad as one of these that Shamgar made that prodigious slaughter? I am confident that whoever should see one of these instruments, which are commonly used in all these parts, would judge it to be a weapon, not less fit, perhaps fitter, than a sword, for such an execution." It is probable that the policy of disarming the Israelites, mentioned in Saul's time, 1 Sam. xiii. 19, was now introduced by their enemies; and that Shamgar, for want of other weapons, had recourse to an ox-goad, which was left for purposes of agriculture.—Dr Hales.

† It is very certain, that Joshua burnt the city Hazor, and slew the king thereof, whose name in like manner was Jabin, which might possibly be the common name to all the kings of the country, as those of Egypt were called Pharaoh: but it seems not improbable, that this Hazor might be retaken, and rebuilt by its ancient inhabitants, and that this king might be a descendant of the other. Some indeed interpret the words thus .- That this Jabin was king of that part of Canaan which lay in the country where Hazor formerly stood, and whose seat then was at Harosheth of the Gentiles;

hundred chariots armed with iron, and his judged Israel at that time. subjects a warlike people.

Israelites with great severity for twenty 'To this great prophetess the Lord comyears; God, upon the repetition and aggravation of their transgressions, increasing their punishment. And so cruel were the people to them, that they durst not travel the common roads upon their ordinary occasions, but were forced to seek by-ways to avoid their enemies, so that their highways were disused: neither could they in safety dwell in their villages, being attacked by their archers, if they went but out to draw water; * nay, so servile was their condition, that they were not suffered to keep any arms.

Having been thus severely punished for their transgressions by a subjection to their cruel and inveterate foes, God was pleased at last to remember mercy; and seeing their sufferings had brought them to a sense of their sins, he found out a way to deliver them, beyond what they could imagine or expect. For it is very much to be suspected, that at this time the Israelites, by the severity of their servitude, were so degenerated and dispirited, that the sex, which boasts itself created for empire, could not at that time furnish their present exigencies with a man fit to be invested with sovereign power.

for they understand this place to be mentioned in the text, as the dwelling-place, not of Sisera but of Jabin himself, whose general Sisera was. But there is no reason for this inversion of the order of the words, since the Canaanites might, between the time of Joshua and Deborah, find frequent opportunities, considering the corruption and idleness of the Israelites, to re-establish their ancient kingdom in these parts, to rebuild their former capital, and to set up one of the old royal line to be their king; who, according to the common usages of those ages, retained one and the same name with his predecessors .- Wells's Geo-

* Dr Shaw mentions a beautiful rill of water in Barbary, that runs into a large bason for the accommodation of travellers, which bears a name signifying 'Drink and away,' from the danger which they incur of meeting with assassins there.

He was a powerful prince, well stored which reason, in all probability, Deborah with all warlike ammunition, having nine the wife of Lapidoth is said to have

She was a prophetess, + and the Israel-This king lorded it over the oppressed ites used to come to her for judgment. municated his thoughts of delivering his people, and by his Spirit directed her to send for Barak, the son of Abinoam, a brave young prince of the tribe of Naph-

> He came, and she acquainted him, that it was the pleasure of the Lord that he should get together ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them towards mount Tabor; t and, to

> † The words prophet, and prophetess, are of very ambiguous signification in both Testaments: sometimes they denote persons extraordinarily inspired by God, and endued with the power of working miracles, and foretelling things to come; and sometimes they are used for persons endued with special, though not miraculous gifts, or graces, for the better understanding and explaining the word of God. As therefore we read nothing of any miraculous action that Deborah did, she perhaps was only a woman of eminent holiness, and prudence, and knowledge of the holy scripture, by which she was singularly qualified to 'judge the people,' that is, to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the word of God .-

> † Tabor is a very remarkable mountain in Galilee, not far from Kadesh, in the tribe of Zebulun, and in the confines of Issachar and Naphtali. It has its name from its eminence, because it rises up in the midst of a wide champaign country, called the valley of Jezreel, or the great plain. It was a very proper place for the rendezvous of Barak's forces, since it stood upon the confines of so many different tribes, was not accessible by the enemy's horses and chariots, and had on the top of it a spacious plain, where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army. What travellers tell us of this mountain is much to the same purpose: "After a very laborious ascent," says Mr Maundrell, "we reached the highest part of the mountain, which has a plain area at top, fertile and delicious, and of an oval figure, about one furlong in breadth, and two in length. This area is inclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, and from hence you have a prospect, which (if nothing else) well rewards the labour of ascending it; for it is impossible for the eyes of man to behold any greater gratification of this nature. On the north west you discern at a distance the Mediterranean, and all around you have the spacious and beautiful plains of Esdraelon and Galilee. Turning a little southward, you have in view the high mountains of Gilbon, fatal to Saul and his sons. Due east you discover the

of the Lord, that Sisera, general of Jabin's army, with his army and chariots, should fall into his hands.

Barak, considering the inequality of their forces, and the greatness of the enterprise, and thinking it necessary to have the prophetess with him to consult upon all occasions, as well as to encourage his men, told her, if she would go with him, he would go; but not else.

The undaunted prophetess consented to accompany him; but pleasantly told him for his diffidence, that this expedition should not be for his honour; for Sisera the general should fall into the hands of

Departing together for Kadesh, which was Barak's residence, he soon listed ten thousand volunteers in Zebulun and Naphtali, and led them to mount Tabor, the prophetess still accompanying him.

Such a number of distressed people being got together, it soon began to be rumoured about the country; and notice being given to Sisera of this insurrection, he mustered up all his force to suppress them, taking with him his nine hundred chariots of iron, and down he marched to the river Kishon: * which the courage-

encourage him, she told him in the name ous Deborah seeing, being divinely inspired, gave the signal to the battle; saying to Barak, 'Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand.'

> Barak upon this marched down the mountain Tabor, and fell upon Sisera, in the valley by the river; whose army God struck with such terror, by driving storms of rain and hail in their faces, that they could not stand before the Israelites: who pursuing them, put them all to the sword, except the general Sisera, who, not daring to trust to his chariot, took to his heels, and fled, till he came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite,+ who dwelt in that country, which was at peace with king Jabin.

> Jael seeing Sisera coming, went out to meet him, and invited him to come in. He, glad of the opportunity, went in confidently, not suspecting any danger from her, whose husband was his master's ally.

> But his security proved fatal to him. for being extremely thirsty, through the heat and fatigue of the day, he entreated Jael to give him a little water to drink: instead of which, she gave him as much milk as he cared for; and having allayed his thirst, he directed her, that if any body should come to inquire after him, she should not own he was there. And now thinking himself safe, he laid him down upon the floor to sleep, Jael very

sea of Tiberias, distant about one day's journey. A few points to the north appears that which they call the mount of the beatitudes. Not far from this little hill is the city Saphet: it stands upon a very eminent and conspicuous mountain, and is seen far and near. The top of mount Tabor was anciently environed with walls and trenches, and other fortifications, of which some remains are still visible; and, for many ages, it has been believed, that here it was that our blessed Saviour was transfigured."—Poole's Annotations, and Moundrell's Journey.

* The Kishon, which takes its rise in mount Tabor, is only a small stream, except when swelled by the rain or melting snow. 'That ancient river' pursues his course down the middle of the plain of Esdraelon, and then passing close by the side of mount Carmel falls into the sea at a place named Caypha. When Maundrell crossed this stream, on his way to Jerusalem, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but in passing along the side of the plain, he observed the tracts of many tributary rivulets falling down into it from the mountains, by which it must be greatly swelled in the rainy season. It was undoubtedly at the sea-

son when the Kishon, replenished by the streams of Lebanon, becomes a deep and impetuous torrent, that the bands of Sisera perished in its waters. The Kishon, like several other streams in Palestine, does not run with a full current into the sea, except in the time of the rains, but percolates through the sands which interpose between it and the Mediterranean .- Paxton.

These Kenites, though they were proselytes, and worshipped the true God, according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and not of the promised seed, and so not pretending a right or title to the land of Canaan, they held it best policy, in those troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace as well as they could both with the Israelites and Canaanites. Upon this footing it was that there was a peace be-tween king Jabin and the house of Heber the Kenite; and that gave confidence to Sisera in his distress to fly to Heber's tent for protection.

where he had not lain long, before he fell fast asleep.

When Jael perceived he was thus secure, she took a hammer, and a long nail, or tent-pin, and pitching it to the temples of his head, she struck it with such force, that it pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground: after which she cut off his head, and then left him.*

After this, she went to the door of the tent, and saw Barak coming in pursuit of Sisera, whom she went out to meet, and inviting him in, told him, she could show him the man he sought for; which she accordingly did.

Thus did the Almighty exert his power in defence of his people Israel, and caused them to subdue Jabin, king of Canaan, whom they never left fighting with till they had quite destroyed him.

Upon this victory the heroine Deborah, and her valiant general Barak, sung a triumphant song. See Judg. ch. v.

CHAPTER VII.

A famine rages in Israel.—Many depart into a foreign land.—Peculiar circumstance of Naomi and Ruth .- The Israelites after the death of Deborah and Barak revolt from God, but on their return, Gideon is raised as a deliverer.

Peace and quiet at length succeeded war and tumults. But the Israelites growing supine, by an alteration of their

officiously covering him with a carpet: | circumstances, again provoke their God, by falling into their former transgressions. He took them more immediately into his own hands, and chastised their presumption and ingratitude with a severe famine; which raging furiously among the Israelites, many of them were forced to quit their habitations, and seek for food in a foreign land.

> Among the rest, one Elimelech of Bethlehem-Judah, a man of condition and family, removed with his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, to the country of Moab, where Elimelech soon quitted this life.

> After his death, his two sons, not strictly observing the law of God, took each of them a wife of the women of Moab, of base condition. The name of Chilion's wife was Orpah, and the name of Mahlon's Ruth. With these they lived about ten years, when Chilion and Mahlon died, both childless.

> The unhappy Naomi, thus deprived of her husband and children, and left in a strange country, could with no satisfaction stay longer in a place where she had lost all the external comforts of life. being informed that the famine was over in Israel, she resolved to return to her own country; and accordingly set forward for Judah, accompanied with her two daughters-in-law.

> In the course of their journey, Naomi thinking it hard to deprive her daughters of the society and converse of their relatives, persuaded them to go back; and to show that her advice arose not from any disgust, but from mere pity, gave them this affectionate blessing: 'The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have done to me and mine; and grant that ye may marry again to your content, and enjoy a happy settlement.'

> Then giving to each a parting kiss, they in tears pressed her to accept of their company. She endeavoured to dissuade them, by urging, that if they stayed in their own country they might marry again,

^{*} With regard to this deed of Jael, we must judge of it by the feelings of those, among whom the right of avenging the blood of a relative was so strongly rooted, that even Moses could not take it away. Jael was an ally, by blood, of the Israelitish nation; their chief oppressor, who had mightily oppressed them for the space of twenty years, now lay defenceless before her; and he was moreover one of those whom Israel was bound by divine command to extirpate. Perhaps, too, she felt herself called to be the instrument of God in working out for that nation a great deliverance, by thus exterminating their heathen oppressor. At least, Israel viewed it in this light: and in this view we cannot reproach the heroine with that as a crime, which both she and Israel felt to be a deed performed in accordance with the mandate of heaven. -Horne.

At last her importunity prevailed with Orpah, who with tears taking her leave of her mother-in-law, turned back to Moab. But no persuasion could prevail with Ruth, who with the most pressing instances urged Naomi to take her along with her; assuring her, that nothing should part them, but that the God she served should be her God.

Naomi seeing the pious resolution of her daughter Ruth, pressed her no more to return, but they both went on to Bethlehem.

Naomi, being arrived at Bethlehem, where she had lived in good repute, her return was generally taken notice of, and her old neighbours came to congratulate her upon her arrival in her own country.

It was now the beginning of barleyharvest (which usually was in the first month with them) when Naomi returned to Bethlehem. And Ruth the Moabitess being an industrious woman, desired Naomi to give her leave to go into the field to glean some corn. The mother consented, and she happened to go into a field belonging to Boaz, a very wealthy person of the family of Elimelech, and nearly related to him; and there she gleaned after the reapers. She had not been long there, before Boaz himself came into the field to look after his workmen; and having saluted them in a very devout manner, he took notice of Ruth, and asked his steward who she was? He told him, she was a Moabitish damsel that accompanied Naomi in her return home from the country of Moab, and that she had asked leave to glean after the reapers.

Boaz, having been acquainted with her dutiful and affectionate behaviour to her mother-in-law, his kinswoman, encouraged her to glean in his ground, and to keep with his servants, and fare as they did; and charged them not to molest her. Ruth, surprised at this unexpected civility of a stranger, returned her thanks in a

which they could not propose if they went; most profound respect and acknowledgment of his courtesy.

Boaz told her he had heard of her affectionate carriage to her mother-in-law, and that she was come with her into a strange country, out of a pious design, to be under the care and protection of the God of Israel; whom he solemnly prayed to recompense her good actions, and give her a full reward.*

After this he treated her at his own board very liberally; and when his servants returned to their work in the field, he charged them to be civil to her, and to give her opportunity of gleaning the more, by dropping some of the sheaves. Thus Ruth continued gleaning among Boaz's servants till the barley and wheat harvest were over, dwelling still with Naomi, to whom she returned every evening with what she had gleaned, and acquainted her with the great humanity of Boaz.

Naomi, studious to recompense this tender affection of her daughter-in-law, projected how she might engage her kinsman Boaz to marry Ruth, whose civility she might reasonably imagine proceeded from some other motive than that of common courtesy or humanity.

Therefore acquainting Ruth that Boaz was her near kinsman, and informing her what the law of Moses required in that case, she advised her to wash and anoint, and dress herself, and go to Boaz's barn, where he was winnowing his barley; + but

great note among the ancient Hebrews; they were covered at the top to keep off the rain, but lay open on all sides, that the wind might come in

^{*} Ruth seems to have been a woman of a very amiable mind: she was modest, and she was industrious, and most probably a comely woman; and all these things served to attract the attention of Boaz, and to engage his affection. Her attachment also to her mother-in-law could not fail to secure his esteem. All these things worked together in the course of providence, to bring about a matrimonial connexion, which in its issue was intimately connected with the salvation of a lost world; for, from this very line, Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, sprang; and Ruth showed herself as worthy to be one of his progenitors as the Virgin Mary was to be his mother.—Clarke.

† The thrashing floors or barns were places of

not to let it be known she was there, till he had supped, and was gone to rest, giving her instructions what she should do farther.

Ruth, pursuant to the advice of her mother, set herself forth to the best advantage, went to the barn, and placed herself so conveniently that she could see what passed without being noticed.

When Boaz had refreshed himself, he lay down at the end of a heap of corn; and Ruth, waiting till he was asleep, came softly, and lifting up the clothes undiscovered, laid herself down at his feet.*

freely, for the winnowing of the corn; which being done, they were shut up at night, with doors fitted to them, that if any body lay there, he might be kept warm, and the corn be secured from the dan-ger of robbers: the time of winnowing, or separating the corn from the chaff, was in the evening, when the heat of the day was over, and cool breezes began to rise; for this purpose, they had the same implements which are in common use: for Isaiah speaks of winnowing with the shovel, and with the fan. The grain, being thrashed, was thrown into the middle of the thrashing floor; it was then exposed with a fork to a gentle wind which separated the broken straw and the chaff: so that the kernels, and clods of earth with grain cleaving to them, and the ears not yet thoroughly thrashed, fell upon the ground. The clods of earth, as is customary in the East at the present day, were collected, broken in pieces, and separated from the grain by a sieve; whence the operation of sifting is, in prophetic language, a symbol of misfortune and overthrows. The heap thus winnowed which still contained many ears that were ed, which still contained many ears that were broken but not fully thrashed out, was again exposed in the thrashing floor, and several yoke of oxen were driven over it, for the purpose of treading out the remainder of the grain. At length the grain, mingled with the chaff, was again exposed to the wind by a fan, which bore off the chaff, so that the pure corn fell upon the floor .- Horne,

* Though the action of Ruth, here set forth, seems at first sight hardly consistent with decency; yet, if we consider the simplicity of those times, it will appear very excusable: to which if we add the virtuous character of the woman, the age of Boaz, the manner of his addressing her when he first perceived her, the testimony he bore to her prudence and good conduct, the public proceedings before the wedding, and the several other circumstances of this history, there is not the least ground to suspect the virtue of either of them; and there is nothing but the purest innocence in the whole transaction. Ostervald.—If we consider the end, the motives, and the circumstances of this action, we shall not pass on it an unfavourable judgment. Ruth had a right to pretend to marriage with Boaz, whom Naomi seems to have

Boaz, waking about midnight in a fright, asked who she was? To which she answered, 'I am Ruth thy servant: spread therefore the wing of thy garment over me, + for thou art a near kinsman.'

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Boaz, though advanced in years, was so far from rejecting her, that he commended her forwardness; and being a virtuous man, told her, she had shown more piety to her dead husband than when he was alive, in raising up issue to his name, by marrying her kinsman, and that her virtue was conspicuous in not following young men, whether poor or rich. Therefore he assured her, he would not fail to answer her desire, and his duty; which he had the greater inducement to do, because she had the general reputation of a virtuous wife. But at the same time told her, that though he indeed was a near kinsman, yet there was another nearer, to whom he must give the preference, because it was his right; and that he would communicate the matter to him next morning; and if that kinsman would marry her, he might, otherwise he himself would assuredly marry her.

To obviate any reflection that might be cast on her character or religion, she arose early in the morning and departed; but

thought her nearest of kin. She endeavours to discover some means of making him acquainted with her desire to take advantage of this right. she well knew the justice, the probity, the age of Boaz; and was resolved on her part, with the assistance of God, which she could best hope to insure by dutiful obedience to Naomi, to form no connexion with him, except by the ties of lawful marriage. Boaz regarded her conduct as flowing from a virtuous principle, and dictated of the desire of becoming a good Israelite, by giving birth to children who might revive the name of her deceased husband; and spoke to her in the terms of commendation recorded Ruth iii. 10. In fact, she sufficiently displayed the uprightness of her intentions, by not attaching herself to young men, as he there expresses it, but to an old man, who was of an age to be a father to her.—Calmet.

was of an age to be a father to her.—Calmet.

† This was as if she had said, take me to wife as the law directs; for the phrase of spreading the skirt or wing over one, imports taking such a one into protection. And because it is the part of a husband to protect and defend his wife from injuries, therefore to spread the wing or skirt over one, is used for a periphrasis of marriage.

that she might not go home empty-handed to her mother, Boaz gave her six measures of barley; with which Ruth returned to her mother, who received her joyfully, both for the present of Boaz and his kind treatment of her daughter, whom she advised to take no notice to any of what had passed, but patiently to wait the event; assuring her that Boaz was a man of honour, and would perform his promise.

Boaz, punctual in the performance of his word, appeared that morning at the gate of the city, which was in those days the usual place of judicature.* There he met with the kinsman he had mentioned to Ruth; and summoning ten more of the chief of the city, he, in their presence,

acquainted him, that Naomi, who was come back from the country of Moab, had a parcel of land to dispose of, which belonged formerly to Elimelech, of which he gave him this public notice, that he might redeem it, † the right of redemption belonging in the first place to him; and therefore he desired to know his mind in this matter.

The kinsman readily consented to redeem the land. But when Boaz told him, that at the same time he must likewise take Ruth the Moabitess to wife, to raise up the name of her dead husband upon his inheritance, he declined the business; giving this for a reason, that he could not do it on those terms, without destroying his own inheritance; and therefore he willingly resigned his right of redemption to Boaz; who, without any scruple, accepted it, and his kinsman, according to the custom of those times, in token of relinquishing or transferring his right, took off his shoet and delivered it to Boaz.

Upon which Boaz made this declaration to the elders and all the people present: 'Ye are my witnesses this day, that I

† The reason of this seems to be grounded upon the law, by which the first-born of such a marriage was to bear the name of the woman's former husband that was dead, to keep up his name in Israel; so that if that kinsman had married Ruth, and should have had but one son by her, that son being not to bear his name, but the name of her former husband, he himself should have no son to keep up his name in Israel; and so his inheritance might have been lost from his name, by passing into another name and family; which he was not willing to hazard.

^{*} We here see the simple manner in which judicial proceedings took place in those times. judge sat in the gate, the place of resort in every city where public business was transacted; no writings were employed or tedious formalites observed, but the party was merely summoned to make his appearance. In this instance Boaz pro-bably summoned the person by name, although the sacred writer has not expressed the name, but has merely used the general words which we trans-late 'Ho, such a one!' From the circumstances of the gates of cities being the seat of justice, the judges appear to have been termed the Elders of the Gate; for, as all the Israelites were husbandmen, who went out in the morning to work, and did not return until night, the city gate was the place of greatest resort. By this ancient practice, the judges were compelled, by a dread of public displeasure, to be most strictly impartial, and most carefully to investigate the merits of the causes which were brought before them. The same practice obtained after the captivity. The Ottoman court, it is well known, derived its appellation of the Porte, from the distribution of justice and the despatch of public business at its gates. During the Arabian monarchy in Spain, the same practice obtained; and the magnificent gate of entrance to the Moorish palace of Alhamra at Grenada to this day retains the appellation of the 'Gate of Justice' or 'of Judgment.' To the practice of dispensing justice at the gates of cities, there are numerous allusions in the sacred volume. For instance, in Job v. 4. the children of the wicked are said to be crushed in the gate; that is, they lose their cause, and are condemned in the court of judgment. The Psalmist, speaking of those whom God has blessed with many children, says that 'they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate;' that is, those who are thus blessed, shall courageously plead their cause, and need not fear the want of justice when they meet their adversaries in the court of judicature. - Calmet and Horne.

[†] This was the manner of confirming bargains, sales, exchanges, and alienations among the Israelites. There were two sorts of it: The first was penal; as when a man refused to marry his brother's wife, to raise up seed to the deceased, who died childless; for then the law commanded, that the woman should pluck off his shoe, and spit in his face, using these words: 'Thus shall it be done to the man that refuseth to raise up issue to his brother's family.' The second was cessionary, or in token of resignation, and did not reach to compel the kinsman in the second, third, and fourth degree to marry the widow: but he might transfer his right to any other of the kindred; and as a sign of his cession or translation of his right, he took off his shoe and delivered it to his kinsman, who would marry the widow, in the presence of the elders.

have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was his son's, at the hand of Naomi. Ye see likewise I have purchased Ruth the Moabitess to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon their inheritance, that their name may not be lost among their relations. Of this I call you to witness this day.'

To all which the assembly gave their acknowledgment; adding a hearty prayer, that she might be fruitful as Rachel and Leah, who were the original raisers of the house of Israel.

Ruth conceived, and in due time was delivered of a son, whom they named Obed; which Obed was the father of Jesse, and grandfather of king David, of whom, according to the flesh, came the Saviour of the world.*

During the wise and virtuous administration of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites enjoyed the blessing of peace; but when their conductors died, they fell into their constitutional sin of idolatry, and provoked their God to deliver them into the hands of their enemies. He permitted the Midianites to over-run their country, who for seven years kept them in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to dens in the mountains and caves in the earth, and to fortified places; from whence, in spring-time, they stole out to sow their land; but towards harvest the Amalekites and Midianites came and encamped in their country, and tarried till they had devoured all the provision and forage they could find, and then they returned, leaving the Israelites nothing to support life.

The poor Israelites being served thus year after year, at last grew greatly impoverished, which put them in mind that by their sins they had drawn this punishment upon themselves; and that the only

have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was his son's, at the hand of Naomi. Ye see likewise I have purchased them.

> Whilst they were supplicating God for help, he sent a prophet + to expostulate with them for their ingratitude, by which he brought them to a sense of their folly, and his justice in punishing them.

> This judgment brought them humble before the Lord, and prepared them for a due reception of the blessing he was about to confer, in sending them a deliverer, in the person of Gideon, the son of Joash.

At this time Gideon was thrashing wheat,‡ that he might hide it from the Midianites. And whilst he was thus employed in providing sustenance for his family, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, 'The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valour.'

† St Augustine supposes him to be that angel which soon after appeared to Gideon; but others generally suppose him to be some person endued with the spirit of prophecy by God, and sent to the Israelites, as other prophets were.

I The method of thrashing out the grain varied according to the species. Isaiah mentions four different instruments, the flail, the drag, the wain. and the feet of the ox. The staff, or flail, was used for the smaller seeds, which were too tender to be treated in the other methods. The drag consisted of a sort of strong planks, made rough at the bottom with hard stones or iron; it was drawn by oxen, or horses, over the corn sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it. The wain, or cart, was much like the former, but had wheels, with iron teeth or edges like a saw. From the statement of different authors, it would seem that the axle was armed with iron teeth, or serrated wheels throughout. Niebuhr gives a description of such a machine, used at present in Egypt for the same purpose; it moves upon three rollers, armed with iron teeth or wheels to cut the straw. In Syria, they make use of the drag, constructed in the very same manner as before described. This not only forced out the grain, but also cut the straw in pieces, which is used in this state over all the East as fodder for the cattle. In the early periods of the Jewish commonwealth, however, these various methods, adapted to the different kinds of grain, were unknown; the husbandman employed the staff, or flail, in thrashing all his crop. And thus when the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he found him thrashing wheat by the wine press with a staff, for so the original term signifies; but the natural sagacity of the human mind, directed by the finger of God, at last invented the other more efficacious implements, to which Isaiah so frequently refers in the course of his writings -Paxton,

^{*} Herein is described, how Jesus Christ proceeded of Ruth, notwithstanding she was a Moabite of low condition, and a stranger from the people of God: which was a type, that the Gentiles should be sanctified by him, and joined with his people.

Gideon was soon apprized, by the manner of this salutation, that it was a message extraordinary; and as readily replied, 'If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles, which our forefathers have told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.'

The angel, looking steadfastly on him, said, 'Be courageous, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. Is it not I that send thee?'

But Gideon, considering his own weakness, and the low condition of his own family, more than the presence of him that spoke to him, answered, 'In what capacity am I to serve Israel since my family is but poor in the tribe of Manasseh, and myself the least among them?'

The angel to encourage him said, 'Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites with as much ease as if they were but one man.'

This promise offered Gideon a dawn of hope; but desirous of an assurance of the person who talked with him, he said, 'If now I have found favour in thy sight, be pleased to show me some token whereby I may know that it is thou the Lord that talkest with me. Wherefore depart not hence, I pray thee, till I return with my offering, and set it before thee.'

The angel promised to tarry; and Gideon having prepared a kid, and some unleavened cakes,* he came and presented

them before the angel; by whose direction, having laid them upon the rock, the angel, with the end of his staff, touched the cakes and the flesh, upon which fire came out of the rock and consumed them; and the angel instantly disappeared.

Gideon upon this was sensible that it was an angel that had appeared to him, and crying out in despair, said, 'Alas, my Lord God! because I have seen an angel face to face, I shall die.'

But the angel, though Gideon could not see him, to confirm and comfort him, bid him not fear, for he should not die. Gideon, in thankful remembrance of this gracious interview, and God's goodness to him, built an altar there, and called it Jehovah-shalom, that is, 'the Lord of peace.'

The same night the Lord commanded Gideon to demelish the altar of Baal, which in those corrupt times had been erected, and to cut down the groves there; and build an altar to the Lord his God upon the top of the rock; after which, to sacrifice his father's second bullock † upon it, which was seven years old, and offer it for a burnt-sacrifice, with the wood of the grove, which he was to cut down.

Gideon readily obeyed God; but considering it would be difficult to do this in the day-time, he resolved to do it by night; and taking ten of his servants to assist him, he did as God had commanded.

The inhabitants of the place being informed what Gideon had done, demanded

could provide something more substantial; that he immediately killed a kid, seethed part of it, and when ready, brought out the stewed meat in a pot, with unleavened cakes of bread which he had baked; and the other part, the kab-ab, in a basket, for him to carry with him for some after-repast in his journey.

^{*} The manner in which the Arabs entertain strangers will cast light on this place. Dr Shaw observes: "Besides a bowl of milk, and a basket of figs, raisins, or dates, which upon our arrival were presented to us to stay our appetite, the master of the tent fetched us from his flock, according to the number of our company, a kid or a goat, a lamb or a sheep; half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served up with cucasoe; the rest was made kab-ab, that is, cut to pieces and roasted, which we reserved for our breakfast or dinner next day." May we not suppose, says Mr Harmer, that Gideon, presenting some slight refreshment to the supposed prophet, according to the present Arab mode, desired him to stay till he

past in his journey.

† This bullock is thought by the Rabbins and others to be called the second from the stall in which it stood and was fed, which was the second in order of place; and being as many years old as their subjection to Midian was, the destroying this bullock might in some measure prefigure the breaking off the Midianitish yoke from the neck of Gideon; whose name signifies a breaker or destroyer.

him to death: but Joash would not deliver his son, resolutely saying, 'If Baal is God, let him avenge himself on him that destroved his altar.'* From which occasion Joash called his son Gideon, Jerub-baal, which signifies, 'Let Baal avenge?' Thus this tumult ended.

CHAPTER VIII.

Gideon musters the tribes .- Receives an omen of success .- Is appointed a select number of men. -Encouraged by a dream .- Obtains a signal victory over the enemies of Israel, and dies in peace. The Israelites fall into idolatry and ingratitude .- Abimelech is made king; after the bloody massacre of his brethren .- Abimelech and the Shechemites are punished for their cruelty and wickedness.

It was now about the time when the Midianites and Amalekites, with other eastern people, used to come and plunder the country, who, appearing in a vast body, encamped in the valley of Jezreeli+

Then was Gideon inspired with a more than ordinary courage, and by sound of trumpet summoned all those of his own family to come in quickly to him. also sent messengers through the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali,

* It is generally supposed that Gideon's father had been a worshipper if not a priest of Baal; and therefore it is not unlikely that he had at this time been convinced by his son that God had given him a commission to recover his people, and to begin with this reformation; and this made him appear so boldly in his son's cause, because he knew it was the cause of God.—Poole's Annotations, and Patrick's Commentary.

The city of Jezreel, which gave name to the valley, belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the west of Jordan, and lay in the confines of that half tribe and the tribe of Issachar, as appears from Josh. xix. 18. In the history of the kings of Israel, this city is frequently made meation of, where, by reason of the pleasantness of its situation, some of them had a royal palace, though their capital was Samaria. The vale of Jezreel, which is now called the plain of Esdraelon, is, according to Mr Maundrell, of a vast extent, very fertile, but uncultivated, and only serving the Arabs for pasturage; but some have supposed that the val-ley of Jezreel here mentioned denotes some other lesser valley, lying between mount Hermon and mount Gilboa - Wells's Geography.

him of his father, that they might put and they came in such numbers, that in a short time he could muster up an army of two and thirty thousand men, which were but few in comparison of the enemy's army, which consisted of an hundred and thirty five thousand men.

Gideon, considering the vast odds the enemy had, begged of God to give him some omen for an assurance of success to him and his men. The sign he proposed was, that he laying a fleece of wool on the floor, the dew should be upon the fleece only, t and the earth round it should be dry. Which the next morning was done; for the ground about it was dry, but the fleece was so full of dew, that he wrung a bowl-full of water out of it. Then inverting the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry, and the ground dewy; which was likewise done.

I He supposed that the dew which distilled from heaven was a divine gift, (as the scripture often testifies) and therefore he desired that it might be directed by God, that, though it commonly falls every where, by his extraordinary providence it might now water only his fleece. Some are apt to think that he chose a fleece for his purpose, not only because it was ready at hand, but the better to express how the land was shorn by the Midianites, even as the sheep had been by him; that when he begged the dew, as a sign of the divine favour, might fall upon the fleece, it was to represent the kindness of God to him; and when he begged it might fall upon the whole ground, to represent his favour to all the people. But there is a farther reason why he might desire to have the miracle inverted; for, as it is in the very nature of the wool to draw moisture to it, some might be apt to think that there was no great matter in this; and therefore he requested of God a second miracle, which was contrary to the former .- Patrick's Commentary.

§ When the angel of the Lord, or a person much superior, as some suppose, appeared to him, and brought him the news of God's having appointed him to deliver his people from the oppression of the Midianites, he seems indeed at first to be willing to decline the office, as conscious of his own incapacity; but desires withal to have some conviction given him, that the messenger came from heaven, and was in reality no impostor; but when once he was satisfied in this, he never pretended to dispute the divine command. He knew very well, that, when he pulled down the altar and grove of Baal, he must necessarily incense the whole country against him, and run the hazard of his own life; and yet, to do it more effectually, he took to his aid ten of his father's servants, and that he might meet with no molestafolly and ingratitude of the Israelites, and

tion, did it in the night. He knew very well that when he sounded a trumpet in order to form an insurrection in the country, and to raise some forces to assert his nation's liberty, the Midianites would interpret this as an open declaration of war, and come against him with an army as numerous as the sand on the sea shore for multitude; but this he mattered not. He knew that two and thirty thousand men were but a handful in comparison of the enemy; and yet to see two and twenty thousand of these desert him all at once, and of the ten thousand that remained, no more left at last than bare three hundred; this was enough to stagger any one's mind that had not a firm reliance on the word and promises of God. He giants, and armed cap-a-pee with coats of mail, would not be able to do any great execution against so numerous a foe; but when he found that instead of being armed he was to attack the enemy naked, and, instead of swords and spears, as usual, his soldiers were to march in such a plight as was never seen before, with every one a light, a pitcher, and a trumpet in his hand; and when they came up with their enemy, were to break their pitchers, flourish their lights, sound their trumpets, and instead of regular fighting, were only to shout and roar like so many men either mad or drunk; who but a Gideon that had his faith confirmed by so many visions and miracles before, would have obeyed and put in execution such orders, as must have been thought wild, and frantic, and absurd, had they proceeded from any other mouth but God's? Well therefore might he be allowed to request a repetition, nay, a multiplication of miracles, who was to have the trial of his faith and obedience carried to such an extremity: but the truth of the matter is, that it was not for his own sake that he made this request. He had been sufficiently convinced by the fire's breaking out of the rock at the touch of the rod in the angel's hand, that nothing was im-possible to God, and that the means which he directed, how incongruous soever they might appear to men, would certainly not fail of their effect : but it was for the sake of his allies that had just now joined him in this expedition, that he sent up his petition to God to have them likewise satisfied; and therefore we may observe that when all the quotas were come up, and encamped to-gether, then (very likely in the audience of the whole army) he requested of God, and said, 'If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor,' &c. It was for their sakes, I say, that the miracles were wrought, that they, who were to share in so hazardous a war, and to destroy the armies of the aliens with so small a force, nay, with no force at all, should have some assurance given them that the God of Israel, who had so often promised their forefathers that if they would continue in his favour, one of them should chase

Gideon, being fully convinced by this rightly foreseeing, that if with this army double miracle, resolved forthwith to at- they should conquer the Midianites, they tack the enemy. But God knowing the would vainly impute it to their own courage and numbers, and not to his assistance; therefore ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whosoever was afraid, should have liberty to return

> Upon this, two and twenty thousand quitted this expedition, only ten thousand remaining with Gideon. This was a very inconsiderable number, in comparison of the numerous host of the Midianites.

> But yet, few as the Israelites were, it came within the verge of possibility that they might defeat their foes with this handful of men: and therefore God resolving that the whole action and victory should appear to be his doing, ordered Gideon to bring his soldiers down to the water, where he would give him a sign to direct him what men to select for this business, which was this. They that took up water in their hands and lapped it, should go with him; but they who lay down to drink, should not go.* Only

a thousand, and two of them put ten thousand to flight,' was determined to assist them in this enterprise .- Stackhouse.

* Interpreters are sadly puzzled to conceive for what possible reason God made a distinction between the soldiers who lapped water in their hands and those that laid themselves down to drink. Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that all, except the three hundred, who lapped, had been accustomed to the worship of Baal, which they unwarily discovered by their kneeling to drink: but this is a groundless, and far-fetched conceit. The notion of those who impute these three hundred men's lapping some to their sloth and laziness, and others to their timorousness, and the great fear they were in of being surprised by the enemy, is of no more validity: for though God, if he thought fit, might have employed the most dastardly among them upon this expedi-tion, that the glory of the victory might entirely redound to himself; yet since, as we are told, all the fearful persons were dismissed before, and since it but badly befits the character of the courageous to be lazy; this action of lapping is rather to be accounted a token of their temperance, and of the nobleness of their spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the enemy that they would not stay to drink, but, though they were very thirsty, contented themselves to moisten their mouths, as we say, with a little water; wherehands, whom God commanded him to keep with him, and dismiss the rest.

But lest Gideon, upon God's reducing his army to so small a number as three hundred men, should grow diffident of the promised success, he was commanded to take his servant Phurah, and late at night go to the enemy's camp, and listen, where he should hear that which would encourage him: which he accordingly did; and there he heard a soldier expounding a dream to another, which was so in favour of the Israelites, that he heard his own name mentioned with this advantage, that God would deliver the Midianitish army into the hands of Gideon.

Thus encouraged, Gideon, in humble adoration, worshipped the God of his mercies; and getting back undiscovered, put his men in order, dividing them into three companies, an hundred in each. He gave to every man a trumpet, and a pitcher, with a burning lamp in it, charging them to observe his motions, and do just as they should see him do.

Gideon having thus disposed this little body of men, put himself at the head of one of them; and giving the signal, by breaking the pitchers, and sounding their trumpets, the rest did the like, and with a terrible shout, they cried out, 'The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!' alarm affected their eyes and their ears with unusual objects, and, increased by the horror of the night,* so added to their

three hundred of them drank out of their | confusion, that, mistaking their own party, they fell on each other's swords,-God having before disposed the Midianites for destruction; so that Gideon and his army gained an easy victory, having nothing to do but to pursue a flying and timorous enemy.+

> In this they were assisted by those that on proclamation had deserted the common cause, who, though they were afraid to fight, yet had courage to pursue.

Gideon, to make sure work, and to prevent the Midianites, for some time, to give Israel any disturbance, sent to the Ephraimites to possess themselves of the passes on the Jordan, that so few or none of them might escape.

This they accordingly performed, taking Oreb and Zeeb, two Midianitish princes.

† A modern piece of Arab history greatly illus-trates the defeat of the Midianites by the admirable contrivance of Gideon. Achmed, an Arabian prince, contested with Bel Arab the imamship of Oman; but finding himself too weak at first to risk the issue of a battle, he threw himself, with a few soldiers, into a little fortress, built in a mountain, where he had deposited his treasures. His rival, at the head of four or five thousand men, invested the place, and would have forced the new imam to surrender, had he not quitted the fortress with two of his domestics; all three disguised like poor Arabs, who were in search of grass for their camels. Achmed withdrew to a town, a good day's journey from the besieged fortress, where he was much beloved; he found no difficulty in collecting some hundreds of the inhabitants, with whom he marched against his enemy. Bel Arab had placed his camp between some high mountains near the fortress. Achmed having ordered a coloured string to be tied round the heads of his soldiers, that they might be distinguished from their enemies, sent several small detachments to seize the passes of those mountains. He gave each detachment an Arab trumpet, to sound an alarm on all sides, as soon as the principal party should give the signal; measures being thus taken, the imam's son gave the signal at day-break, and the trumpets sounded on every side. The whole army of Bel Arab being thrown into a panic at finding all the passes guarded, and judging the number of the army to be proportionate to the noise they made, was put to the rout. Bel Arab himself marched with a party to the place where the son of the new imam was keeping guard; he knew Bel Arab, fell upon him, killed him, and, according to the custom of the Arabs, cut off his head, which he carried to his father .- Paxton.

‡ Oreb, in the Hebrew, signifies a crow, and Zeeb a wolf; and these are no improper words

as the rest indulged themselves so far as to drink their belly-full. But after all, the true reason and design of this method seems to be this. That God was minded to reduce Gideon's army to a very small number, which might very likely be done by this means. For, as the season of the year was hot, and the generality of the soldiers weary, thirsty, and faint, it was most probable, that they would lie down, as indeed they did, and refresh themselves plentifully, and scarce to be expected that any great number would deny themselves in this matter .- Patrick and Saurin.

^{*} It is said, what this action began at the beginning of the middle watch: which, dividing the night from six to six into four watches, as most do, should answer to ten at night with us.

whom they slew, and then followed the before threatened them. Nor was he pursuit; which Gideon and his party continued very closely till they came to Succoth, where being faint and weary they halted, and Gideon desired of the inhabitants some refreshment for his men. princes of Succoth, knowing that Gideon with his small party was in chase of Zebah and Zalmunna, two of the kings of Midian, who with fifteen thousand men were fled to Karkor, instead of giving Gideon and his soldiers any refreshment, ridiculed him on the account of his little army, and in derision asked him whether he was so secure of victory over the princes he pursued, as to demand relief of them? This unmannerly and inhospitable treatment so incensed Gideon, that he told them, if the Lord gave him success against Zeba and Zalmunna, he would make them repent their incivility. same he threatened to the inhabitants of Penuel, for the like rudeness; and with his fatigued party continued the pursuit till he came to Karkor, where the two Midianitish princes with their rallied forces lay thoughtless of danger. Gideon taking the advantage of this security, surprised and defeated them, taking the two kings prisoners, whom he brought in triumph with him to Succoth: and called the chiefs of the place, seventyseven in number, who had before upbraided him, to a severe account, chastising them with thorns and briars,* as he had

less sparing to Penuel, whose fortifications he demolished and slew the gover-

The captive princes had mercilessly destroyed all before them in their march, nor did Gideon's family escape the general massacre at Tabor. Gideon, intending to show mercy to the two kings, if they had shown any to his house, demanded what manner of men they were whom they had slain at Tabor; who answered somewhat flatteringly, that they were like him, having the majestic appearance of royal children. Gideon, from their description concluding they were his brethren, whom they had slain, declared, if they had spared them, he would have saved their lives; but since they had killed his brethren, they must expect no mercy. Then commanding his son Jether to fall upon them, he being but a youth, and somewhat timorous, Gideon despatched them with his own hand; ordering them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, and their camels of their rich trappings and furniture.

The Ephraimites, who had behaved most valiantly, brought the heads of Oreh and Zeeb, whom they had slain, to Gideon, as tokens of their signal service; and beginning to quarrel with Gideon for not calling upon them at the first, he wisely pacified them, by magnifying their service and success in the pursuit. And now the strength of Midian being thus broke by the slaughter of their whole army, Israel enjoyed a peace of forty years.

The Israelites, fond of Gideon's courage and conduct, in this great deliverance, resolved to crown his merit with the settlement of the government on him and his

to represent the sagaciousness and fierceness which should be in two such great commanders. Nor was it an uncommon thing for great families, in ancient times, to derive their names from such like creatures: hence the Corvini, crows; Cracchi, jack-daws; Aquilini, eagles; &c., among the Romans, either as omens, or monuments of their undaunted courage, and dexterity in military achievements. But after all, it seems every whit as probable that these were only nicknames, which the Israelites gave these two princes of Midian, to denote their fierceness and rapaciousness of prey. -Bedford and Le Clerc.

* What kind of punishment this was, commen-tators are not well agreed. The word in the Hebrew signifies thrashing, and thence it is generally inferred that Gideon caused the principal men of Succoth, who had denied his soldiers provision in their distress, to be stripped naked, laid flat on the ground, and a good quantity of thorns and briars heaped on them; that so, by cart-wheels. or other heavy carriages passing over them, their flesh might be pierced and torn, and themselves tortured, if not quite crushed to death .- StackCHAP. VIII.]

family. But Gideon, well knowing the and placed it in his own city Ophrah. honour of this victory was not due to him, but God alone, modestly and generously declined their offer, saying, 'I will not rule over you, neither shall my son, but the Lord shall rule over you. Yet to let you see I do not slight your kindness. I will request one thing of you; and that is, that you will give me the earrings of your plunder.'

To this they all readily consented; and spreading a garment on the ground, they threw in the ear-rings which by weight amounted to one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold; besides the rich ornaments and robes of the kings, with the chains * that were upon the camels' necks.

Of this gold Gideon made an ephod,+

* The word which we render 'chains,' is in the original, 'little moons,' which the Midianites might wear strung together about their camels' necks, either by way of ornament or superstition, because they, as well as all other people of Arabia, were very zealous worshippers of the moon .- Le Clerc's Commentary.

† An ephod is a common vestment belonging to priests in general; but that of the high-priest was of very great value. This vestment, however, was not so peculiar to the priests but that sometimes we find the laity (as in the case of David bringing home the ark of God) allowed to wear it; and therefore some have imagined, that the ephod, which Gideon made, was only a rich and costly robe of state, which, on certain occasions, he might wear to denote the station he held in the Jewish republic. But if his intent was only to distinguish himself from others by such a particular vestment, how this could give occasion to the people's falling into idolatry, or any way become a snare to Gideon and his house, we cannot conceive. Others therefore suppose, that the word ephod is a short expression to denote the high-priest's breast-plate, together with the urim and thummim; and hence, by an easy figure, they are led to think, that to make an ephod is to establish a priesthood; and thereupon conclude, that Gideon's crime, in making this ephod, was not to establish idolatry, but only to institute another priesthood, besides that which God had appointed in Aaron and his posterity: and to this purpose they suppose, that he erected a private tabernacle, an altar, a mercy-seat, with cherubim, &c. that, being now made the supreme governor, he might consult God at his own house, in such difficult points as occurred in his administration. But, besides that it is not easy to imagine, that a man, familiar with God, and chosen by him, as Gideon was, should after so signal a victory as he had obtained, immediately apostatize, as he must have poses at first set up. - Stackhouse.

where he dwelt, as a monument of this victory; which in time, by a wrong use. and contrary to the will of Gideon, proved a snare to his family, and indeed to the whole house of Israel.

THE BIBLE.

Gideon survived this signal victory forty years, during which, Israel enjoyed a profound peace; but at his death, they fell, as usual, into idolatry and ingratitude, not only to God, but to the memory of Gideon their deliverer.

Gideon, by several wives, had seventy sons; and by a concubine he had one son, whom he named Abimelech. And though Gideon had refused the government of Israel, both for himself and his sons, yet as soon as he was dead his son Abimelech, an aspiring youth, suggesting to his mother's family at Shechem, that his seventy brethren would usurp the government over them, advised them to consider, whether it would not be better for them to be governed by one, than by seventy

done, had he set up an oracle in his own house, there seems to have been no manner of necessity for it, because Shiloh (where the tabernacle stood) was in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to that of Manasseh, whereunto Gideon belonged. Nor should it be forgotten, that this ephod was set up in Ophrah, which place Gideon quitted as soon as he had resigned his public employ, and, retiring to a country-house of his own, in all probability left this ephod behind him: there is reason. therefore to believe, that the design of setting it. up was merely to be a monument of his remarkable victory over the Midianites, in like manner as other conquerors had done before him; only, as. the common custom was, to erect a pillar, or hang up trophies upon the like occasion, he chose. rather to make an ephod, or priest's habit, (per-haps all of solid gold,) as a token that he ascribed this victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing so much, as in the reformation of the true religion by that means. This was an action of no bad intent in Gideon, though, in after times, when the people began to return to idolatry, and had this fancy, among others, that God would answer them at Ophrah, where this ephod was, as well as at his tabernacle in Shiloh, it was perverted to a bad purpose. But, as this abuse arose from the bad purpose. But, as this abuse arose from the mad caprice of the people, and not from any ill intent in Gideon, he is no more chargeable therewith than Moses was with the idolatrous worship which the Israelites, in future ages, paid to the brazen-serpent, which he, for very beneficial purpose.

in mind that he was of their family and ing nothing to fear from Gideon's house,

His relations upon this suggestion pro- Abimelech king.§ posed advancement to themselves, which the treasury of their god Baal-berith, * on him and his family; and that they had and gave it to Abimelech, who with it hired a company of dissolute fellows to attend him.

With these ruffians he repaired to his deceased father's house at Ophrah, where he seized sixty-nine of his brethren, and slew them upon one stone; + the youngest, named Jotham, having timely notice, escaped. Soon after this bloody and un-

* The learned Bochart is of opinion, that the Baal here mentioned was the same with Beroë, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, desired in marriage by Neptune, but given to Bacchus; and that she gave her name to Berith in Phœnicia, where she was much worshipped, and thence trans-lated a goddess in other parts. But, though the word Baal (as he maintains) be frequently used in a feminine sense, yet it can hardly be imagined but that the sacred historian, if he had been minded to express a goddess, might have found out some way of distinguishing her; might have called ner (for instance) Bahalah-berith, the lady, or goddess of Berith, without making both the words of a masculine termination. And therefore the most simple and natural manner of explaining the name is, to take it in general for the god who presides over covenants and contracts, to whom it belongs to maintain them, and to punish all those that violate them. For it is to be observed, that the most barbarous as well as the most intelligent, the most religious as well as the most superstitious nations, have always looked upon God as the witness as well as the vindicator of oaths and covenants; that the Greeks had their Zeus Horkios, as well as the Latins their Jupiter Pistius, or Deus Fidius, whom they looked upon as a god of honesty and uprightness, always superintending in treaties and alliances. And for this reason not improbably, the house of their god Berith was the citadel, the arsenal, and the treasury of the Shechemites, even as Plutarch informs us, that in the temple of Saturn, the Romans reposited both their archives and public wealth .- Bochart, Poole, and Calmet.

+ Some will have this stone to be an altar, dedicated by Abimelech to the idol Baal, and erected in the same place where his father Gideon had before destroyed the altar of Baal, to recompense the disgrace done by him to the idol.

persons; at the same time putting them natural execution, the Shechemites, havassembled together at Millo, ; and chose

When this inhuman procedure reached they insinuated to the Shechemites, who, the ears of Jotham, he went to the top of closing with the project, contrived how to mount Gerizim, where, in a parabolical advance Abimelech to the government; oration he represented to the Shechemites and that money might not be wanting to how his father Jerub-baal had refused to forward the design, they took some out of have the government of Israel settled up-

> † The sentiments of commentators are divided respecting what is meant by the 'house of Millo.' The following appears the most entitled to regard. The 'house of Millo' in Shechem had a great number of persons connected with it, whom the sacred writer distinguishes from the men of the city. And since both were concerned in making Abimelech king, it is natural to conclude that the men of the city were the inferior inhabitants, and the house of Millo the governors of the place; both of whom met in the senate-house to set the crown upon the head of their favourite. paring the account given here with that given afterwards of the house of Millo built by Solomon on the east side of mount Zion, we shall probably arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. The Millo on mount Zion appears to have been of great strength, and essentially connected with the de-fence of Jerusalem; for when Hezekiah discover-ed that Sennacherib meditated the reduction of his capital, 'he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. From the intimate con-nection between the repairing of Millo and the making of darts and other implements of war, it has been conjectured by some writers that one part of that public edifice was occupied as an armoury, in which there is nothing improbable. That it was a public building, in one of whose apartments the council of state met to deliberate upon public affairs, is rendered almost certain by one of the kings of Judah losing his life there by the hands of his princes; for we are told that 'the servants of king Joash arose and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo,' whither he had probably come to consult with his princes and other principal persons upon some affairs of state. is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Millo in Shechem and that in Jerusalem were erected for similar purposes,—one part of the building being employed as an armoury, and another, as a sort of town-hall, where the rulers of the city held their public meetings.—See Script. Illust.
> § In this choice there were neither the call of

God, nor the consent of the people; for Abimelech was not appointed king by the body of the Israelites, but by a few disorderly seditious Shechemites, without the knowledge of Judah or the other tribes, and reigned only in Shechem.

in virtue and honour to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive fig-tree or vine: he then expostulated with them on the injury done to his family, and thus reproached them with their ingratitude: 'If ye have done truly and sincerely in making Abimelech king; and if you have dealt well with Jerub-baal, and his house, who merited so well of you; (for my father fought for you, and delivered you from the oppression of Midian, and yet you have risen up against my father's house this day, and slain his sons, and made Abimelech, the son of his concubine, king, because he is your brother;) if you have done well in this, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him rejoice in you. But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo, and let them devour him.'*

Jotham having thus delivered himself to the Shechemites, made his escape to Beer, + where he lived secure from Abimelech's rage.

Within three years afterwards his curse was verified, both upon Abimelech and the Shechemites; for they conspired against Abimelech, attempting to seize or kill him. But being disappointed of their purpose, they joined another profligate wretch and his company, one that lived by the spoil of others, as the Shechemites did. His name was Gaal, the son of Ebed, and an impudent boaster, but a very great coward.

Gaal being set at the head of this dissolute gang, ravaged the country uncontroled for some time, spoiling the vineyards of the Shechemites who made

now disposed of it to one, as much inferior Abimetech king; and in their mirth and in virtue and honour to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive fig-tree or vine: he then expostulated Gaal.

The wild carriage of the abandoned Gaal soon reached the ear of Zebul, who was Abimelech's viceroy in Shechem; but he not being strong enough to chastise him for his insolence, sent privately to Abimelech, to acquaint him, that Gaal and his mad crew were come to Shechem, and had fortified the city against him, advising him to come by night, and lie in ambuscade till the next-morning, that so he might surprise them.

Abimelech approved of the stratagem, and forthwith put it in execution; which succeeded so well that Gaal, and those that followed him were defeated and slain: and the next day he stormed the place and took it; and to express his resentment more furiously, after he had demolished the city, he sowed it with salt. But during these transactions, some that escaped the fury of the conqueror's sword, and had fled to the tower, seeing the houses of the city thrown down, not supposing themselves safe in the tower, took sanctuary in a fort belonging to the temple of their god Berith: which Abimelech hearing, he took an axe in his hand, and commanding his army to do the same, he marched up to the mount Zalmon, where grew a grove of trees, and cutting down a bough, he laid it on his shoulder, and brought it to the fort. The rest did the same: and when they had laid the boughs together, Abimelech set them on fire; by which about a thousand men and women were destroyed.

That is, let Abimelech be a scourge to the Shechemites, and they to him, in expiation of their injustice and ingratitude to the house of Gideon.

[†] This was a city, that stood on the northern frontiers of the tribe of Judah, which did not acknowledge Abimelech for king, and therefore Jotham knew that he might have sure refuge and protection there.

[†] This was an old custom of punishing cities for treachery. Not that the strowing of salt signified drying up, or rendering of the soil barren (for there was no occasion for that in an inhabited town); but to show the detestation of their rebellion, and that hereafter none should rebuild or re-people it. In this action part of Jotham's curse was accomplished; for Abimelech, though not a lawful king, yet served the Shechemites justly, who, after they had made him their king, revolted from him.

This success encouraged Abimelech to attack the city of Thebez,* which he took by storm. But there being a strong tower in the city, the inhabitants fled thither, and maintained it for some time against all the force of Abimelech, which so irritated the impatient conqueror, that, pursuing his fate, he came near the tower to encourage his men, and facilitate the taking of it by his presence; but pressing too near the door, with a design to have set it on fire, a woman from above cast down a piece of millstone upon his head, which broke his skull.†

Abimelech, finding himself mortally wounded, called hastily to his armourbearer, and commanded him to despatch him, that it might not be said he died by the hand of a woman. His servants obeyed him, and the report of his death was no sooner rumoured among the troops, but they dispersed.

Thus were Abimelech and the Shechemites scourges to each other, and Jotham's curse completed in the fate of both.

* Eusebius says there was a village called Thebez, thirteen miles from Shechem, near Scythopo-

+ Thus Plutarch relates, that Pyrrhus, at the siege of Thebes, was killed by a woman's throwing a tile upon his head; but there is something more remarkable in Abimelech's death by a stone, because, as he slew all his brethren upon one stone, for him to die by no other instrument carried some stamp of his sin upon it. The manner of his death, however, puts us in mind of what the same author records of the Spartan general, Lysander, who fell ingloriously under the walls of Haliartus. "Thus he died," says he, "but not like Cleombrotus, who was slain while he was gloriously making head against an impetuous enemy at Leuctra; not like Cyrus, or Epaminondas, who received a mor-tal wound, while he was rallying his men, and se-curing to them the victory. These great men died in their callings. They died the death of kings and commanders: whereas he, like some common soldier, or one of the forlorn hope, cast away his life ingloriously: giving this testimony to the ancient Spartans, that they did well to avoid storming of walls; in which the stoutest man may chance to fall by the hand, not only of an abject fellow, but by that of a boy, or a woman, as they say Achilles was slain, in the gates of Troy, by the hands of the effeminate Paris."-Patrick and Plutarch.

‡ Here is the concluding lesson of the preceding story: that thus Providence returned upon the

CHAPTER IX.

Tola succeeds Abimelech in the conduct of the Israelites.—They are again punished for their transgressions; and on their submission, favoured with tokens of divine regard.—Jephthah first despised is afterwards vested with the command of the Israelitish army against their enemies.—He behaves bravely; makes an extraordinary vow, which he executes with a most rigid punctuality.—Jephthah dies.—Israel enjoys a peace during the reigns of three leaders.—Particular circumstances which attend the birth of Samson.

Tola, the son of Puah, uncle by the father's side to Abimelech, of the tribe of Issachar, was appointed ruler or judge of Israel in his stead; of which nothing is recorded, but that he governed Israel three and twenty years.

To him succeeded Jair of Gilead who reigned two and twenty years.

After this, God being provoked by the idolatry of the Israelites, he permitted the Philistines, Amorites, and Ammonites to overrun their country as they pleased for eighteen years; and in the last year, the Ammonites bent their whole force against the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to deal with the vast numbers of their enemies, became sensible of their follies, by which they had provoked God to punish them thus; and therefore acknowledging their sin of idolatry, they begged of God to assist them once more.

head of this man the proper reward of his insatiable ambition and cruelty towards the house of his own father; causing him, and the ungrateful and vain people which set him up, to become in a short space of time the instruments of each other's ruin and destruction. Pyle.—How sure and just are the retaliations of God! Gideon's ephod is punished with the blood of his sons; the blood of his sons is shed by the procurement of the Shechemites; the blood of the Shechemites; the blood of the Shechemites is shed by a woman. The tyrant now has his payment; and that time, which he should have bestowed in calling for mercy on God, and in washing his soul with the last tears of contrition, he vainly spends in deprecating an idle reproach, "Slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him;"—a fit conclusion for such a life.—Bishop Hall.

tude, and to increase the pungency of their sorrow, bid them cry to the gods which they had chosen, and try if they would deliver them in the time of their distress. This was a cutting reproof to the Israelites.

However, to recover God's favour and protection, they reformed; for they put away their idols, and served the Lord.

The God of Israel after his wonted goodness to that ungrateful people, having brought them to a sense of their crimes by the rigour of his punishment, again returned to them in much mercy, and pointed out to them the certain means of deliverance.

There was at that time in the half tribe of Manasseh, which settled on the other side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machir, to whom Moses gave the city of Gilead, from whence the family was called Gileadites.

This Gilead had several sons by his wife; and he had one son by a harlot,* whom he named Jephthah.

When Gilead's lawful sons were grown up, they thrust out Jephthah, telling him, that being not born in lawful matrimony, he should have no inheritance among them.

Jephthah upon this, expecting worse usage, hastened from them, and took up

* Several Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the word Zonah may signify, either one of another tribe, or one of another nation; and so, Josephus calls Jephthah, 'a stranger by the mother's side. It is to be observed, however, that among the Jews, if such persons as were deemed strangers embraced the law, their children were capable to inherit among the rest of their brethren. Jephthah indeed, complains of the hard usage he met with, but it was upon this occasion, when his country he found stood in need of him; for had he been unjustly dispossessed of his right of inheritance before, we can hardly suppose that a man of his courage and martial spirit would have sat down contented with his exclusion. It is not to be doubted, therefore, but that he 'was the son of an harlot,' properly so called.—Howell.

But God upbraided them with ingrati- his station in the land of Tob,+ which place being very subject to the depredations and military expeditions of the enemy, Jephthah the rather chose for his residence, being himself naturally brave and daring. In their excursions against the enemy, he always distinguished himself; so at last he was courted to accept a command of a number of young fellows, with whom he went a foraging.

> In this time of general prowess, the Gileadites, thinking themselves aggrieved by the Ammonites, resolved upon war, but wanted a general. Whereupon at a grand meeting of their chiefs, it was agreed, that he who should first attack the Ammonites should be their general.

> Then bethinking themselves of Jephthah, whom they knew to be a man of courage and conduct, they addressed themselves to him, and offered him the command of their army.

Jephthah, surprised at this sudden change, asked them, how they who had expelled him his father's house, could expect any succour from him in their distress?

They acknowledged their present distress was the only motive of their coming, and repeated their importunities to him to go with them.

Jephthah, mindful of the ill treatment he had received from the people, who now offered him a post of honour, determined not to engage with them but upon sure terms. For, says he, 'If I go along with you, and succeed against the Ammonites, shall I be your ruler afterwards?"

Their necessity was so pressing at this time, that they readily consented, solemnly engaging that it should be so. Upon this, Jephthah went with them, and the

[†] We read no where else of this country, which, very probably, was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of Arabia Deserta; or perhaps it is the same with what is called Ish-tob, (2 Sam. viii. 6, 8.) which was in Syria, and so near the Ammonites, that they hired forces from thence, as well as from other nations, to fight against David .- Patrick's Commentary.

Lord in Mizpeh.

self the conduct of the Israelites, in case of success, was greatly animated, and sent ambassadors to the king of Ammon to demand the reason of his invading the Israelites?

The Ammonitish king replied, that the land was his, and that the Israelites, upon their coming out of Egypt, took it from the Ammonites, which now he demanded, or would make them restore it.

Jephthah, by other ambassadors, told him the case from the beginning; that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, being denied to pass through the countries of Edom and Moab, were forced to fetch a great compass until they came unto the land of the Amorites, where they were not only refused a passage, but attacked in a hostile manner, by the Amoritish king, whom the Israelites defeated in a pitched battle, fairly conquering, not only the kingdom of the Amorites, but whatsoever else belonged to Sihon the Amoritish king; who having before taken from the king of Moab the land now in dispute, it fell with the rest by conquest from the Amorite to Israel. Besides, he confirmed Israel's title by a long possession of many years' peaceable enjoyment.

But these reasons would not do with the king of Ammon, who marched directly against the Israelites, and was by them as warmly received.

But before the action, Jephthah, the more readily to secure himself of victory, made this vow* to the Lord: 'If,' said he,

* To make a vow, was an act of religious worship, and in itself no way culpable: nay, not only the Jews, but other nations, looked upon it in this view: and therefore we find Livy so frequently telling us that the Roman generals were wont to vow to Jupiter, or Apollo, or some other god, that if, by their help, they should prove successful, they would devote some part of the spoil they should take in the war to their use, or build

people made him captain over them; and 'thou wilt give me success against the Jephthah repeated the covenant, or agree- Ammonites this day, whatsoever cometh ment, between them and him before the forth of mine house to meet me, when I return, I will surely consecrate to the Jephthah, having thus secured to him- Lord, or I will offer it up for a burntoffering.'+

> To this victory of Jephthah's a civil war succeeded, between the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Gilead.

> The Ephraimites were an ambitious quarrelsome people, and this was not the first instance of their temper, which formerly went no further than words; but

temples and dedicate them to their honour .- Pa-

trick's Commentary.

+ This passage has occasioned no small controversy among commentators. The doubt is, whether Jephthah offered up his daughter for a burntoffering, or consecrated her to the public service of God. It appears that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed, but devoted to the Lord. It is plain that in many cases his vow could not have been executed: for suppose on his return, that a dog, or any other unclean animal, had first met him, he could not have offered it for a burnt-offering, the law of Moses having strictly forbidden such sacrifices; besides, if Jephthah was under a necessity of offering his daughter, who was to be employed in that revolting task? The priests were com-manded to do all in their power to deter the people from the commission of so abominable a practice; the magistrates well knew, that such sacrifices were strictly forbidden by God himself, and certainly no person can conceive Jephthah capable of committing such an inhuman office. Upon the whole, therefore, I think it appears, that she was not sacrificed, but devoted to the service of God. It is said in Judg. xi. 39. that 'she knew no man.' This, it is thought, is a sufficient proof that she was not sacrificed; for otherwise, it would have been superfluous to say, that after the vow was performed, she knew no man. In ver. 40, we are told that 'the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament her.' The original word, which we render lament, is capable of different significations; by some it is translated, 'to talk with;' by others, 'to praise:' if we adopt the first, it is a demonstrative proof that she was alive, and therefore they went at certain seasons to comfort and con-sole her. If the latter, the sense will be, that they went to praise her virtue, who, in the midst of her father's afflictions for the miserable condition to which his rash vow had subjected her, did all in her power to assuage his grief, by assuring him, that she submitted to the will of God with the utmost resignation, and that though a state of perpetual virginity was the greatest punishment which could befall an Israelitish woman, who generally placed her greatest happiness in the expectation of the Messiah's springing from her seed, yet even this she would cheerfully undergo, rather than he should falsify the oath he had made.

now the mutinous Ephraimites carried it | they could not do, calling it Sibboleth; further, and with as little reason; for, assembling their forces together, they came upon Jephthah, and demanded why he fought the Ammonites without them? Jephthah very justly remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their demand, and showed that the cause of their dissatisfaction was owing to themselves, who refused to come to his assistance when the Ammonites attacked him. The unreasonable Ephraimites were so enraged at this just reproach, that, having nothing to urge in vindication of themselves, and depending on their numbers, threatened to burn his house over his head.

Jephthah, finding it to no purpose to reason longer with them, mustered what force he could in so short a time, and being flushed with the late success, resolved to fight the Ephraimites who had no reason to despise him and his, or call them fugitives of Ephraim; for the Gileadites needed no reproach to rouse or whet their courage, especially under the conduct of their valiant general Jephthah. armies joined, and after a short but sharp dispute, the fortune of the battle declared for Gilead, Ephraim being forced to fly.

Jephthah, resolving to make sure work, and prevent the Ephraimites from disturbing him, quickly secured all the passes on the Jordan, which those Ephraimites that escaped in the fight must of necessity pass to get home; so that as fast as any of them came thither, if upon examination they owned themselves Ephraimites, they were put to the sword: if any denied, they gave them the test, which was to pronounce the word Shibboleth,* which

which small variation cost them their lives. In this action and pursuit there were slain two and forty thousand of the Ephraimites.

Jephthah, having thus through the divine assistance signalized his valour in a series of successes, both against foreign and domestic enemies, spent the rest of his life in peace, which lasted not long, for the whole time of his administration was but of six years' continuance.

Jepthath was succeeded by Ibzan of Bethlehem, of whom there is nothing more recorded than that he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, and that he reigned seven years.

Elim, a Zebulunite, succeeded Ibzan, who governed Israel ten years; and after him Abdon ruled eight: all that was said of this last is, that he had forty sons and thirty grandsons.

In these three reigns, Israel enjoyed a peace of three and twenty years; in which time, growing wanton, they lapsed into their former sins; by which they provoked God to punish them, which he did, in delivering them into the hands of the Philistines.

Samson, of whose exploits much is recorded in sacred writ, is supposed to have been born about the time of Jephthah's victory.+ His birth being attended with unusual events and circumstances, we shall relate the particulars.

Samson was the son of Manoah a Danite, ‡

[·] Nothing is more notorious than that the people of the same nation, who speak the same lan-guage, differ very much in their pronunciation of it in several parts of the country. In Palestine the people in Galilee, and those that lived at Jerusalem, spake the same tongue, and yet in the time of Christ, the latter could tell St Peter, that his 'speech bewrayed him.' In Greece all spake Greek, and yet the Ionians, Attics, Dorians, and Æolians pronounced very differently. And here, though

the Gileadites and Ephraimites were all of one nation, yet the latter, we find, could not pronounce the letter schin. There were doubtless, therefore, many other words which they could not frame their mouths to speak, as the Gileadites did, but this one was chosen because it was fit for their purpose. For as shibboleth signifies 'floods of water,' the Gileadites, when they saw any Ephraimite appear, might put this test to him, and bid him say, 'Let me pass over the water.'—Le Clerc and'. Patrick.

[†] Allowing Samson to have been born at this time, he must have been at least thirty years old at the death of Abdon, his immediate predecessor, when he took upon him the administration.

t The tribe of Dan bordering upon the Philis-

whose wife having been long barren, the ed from him; Manoah was not so much angel of the Lord appeared to her, when alone, and told her, she should conceive, and bear a son, directing her how to manage and order herself whilst she was with child, by forbearing wine or strong drink, and all unclean meats. And that after she was delivered of him, she should not shave his head; * for he should be a Nazarite+ unto God from his birth, and should begin to deliver Israel from the oppressions of the Philistines.

The woman informed her husband of this extraordinary interview with the angel, and the injunctions she had receiv-

tines was most exposed to their incursions and invasions, and therefore God out of that tribe chose Samson for a judge and revenger; which is very agreeable to the prophecy of Jacob when he blessed his sons a little before his death: 'Dan shall he a serpent by the way, an adder by the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backwards.

* Long hair was much esteemed among the Jews, and here Samson's mother was forbid to cut his hair, because he was to be a Nazarite unto the Lord, that is, dedicated to him. As to the cutting off his hair after by Delilah, it was done in a fradulent manner, not only to deprive him of his hair, but of his strength, that so they might destroy

+ A Nazarite was one, who, under the Levitical law, either to attain the favour, or avert the judgments, or acknowledge the mercies of Almighty God, vowed a vow of particular purity, and separated himself-for so the word signifies-in an extraordinary manner to the service of God. The time of this vow lasted usually for eight days, sometimes for a month, and, in some cases, for the person's whole life. During this time, the persons (for women, as well as men, might enter into this engagement) bound themselves to abstain from wine, and all strong liquors; not to cut the hair of their heads; not to come near a dead corpse, nor assist at a funeral; nay, the matter was carried so high, that if any happened to die suddenly in their presence, the whole ceremony of this separation was to begin anew. After the time that their separation was ended, they were to offer such sacrifices as the law appointed, and then, being absolved from their vow by the priest, they might drink wine, and use the same freedom that other people did. Samson's Nazaritism-to which he was consecrated by his parents-was to last the whole term of his life; but his frequent intercourse with the Philistines, and the great havoc and slaughter that he so often made among them, would induce one to think that he had a particular dispensation exempting him from the observation of some of the foregoing rules.—See Patrick and Le Clerc.

surprised as overjoyed at the hopes of having a son, but had an earnest desire to see this divine messenger himself, his pretence for it being to be further instructed in the management of the child when he should be born.

God graciously answered his request; and the angel again appeared, repeating to the expecting couple the former instructions. The angel appearing in human shape, Manoah took him to be a man of God, and pressed him to accept of an entertainment.

The angel told him he would not: but advised him to express his gratitude in a burnt-offering to the Lord.

Manoah accordingly prepared a kid and a meat-offering, which he offered as a sacrifice unto God; and then the angel in a wonderful manner discovered himself. which before he refused to do at Manoah's importunity; for when the flame ascended from the altar, the angel ascended in it and disappeared.

Now poor Manoah began too late, he feared, to repent his curiosity, and both. he and his wife prostrated themselves on the ground. But he, looking upon himself and wife as lost, cried out, 'We shall surely die, because we have dared to see God.

But the woman, armed with more reason and courage, argued with her timorous and desponding husband, and told him, that if the Lord had intended to destroy them, he would not have accepted an offering from them, nor condescended to communicate such a blessing to them as he had promised.‡

[†] This is excellent reasoning, and may be of great use to every truly religious mind, in cloudy and dark dispensations of Divine Providence. It is not likely that God, who has preserved thee so long, borne with thee so long, and fed and supported thee all thy life long, girding thee when thou knewest him not, is less willing to save and provide for thee and thine now than he was when, probably, thou trustedst less in him. He who freely gave his Son to redeem thee, can never he indifferent to thy welfare; and if he gave thee

According to the appointed time the and coming to Timnath, a city belonging woman was delivered of a son, whom, from the angel's appearing a second time to her, she called Samson.

By the consequence, it is reasonable to suppose, that Samson's parents observed the directions given by the angel for his nursing and erudition; for whilst a child the Lord blessed him, so that he grew to a wonderful strength. And while he was but a youth, the Spirit of the Lord began to move him* at certain times to exert himself in actions of strength and activity, in the old camp of Dan, + between Zorah and Eshtaol.

CHAPTER X.

Samson's extraordinary exploits from various interesting causes .- Extraordinary conquest over the Philistines .- His remarkable strength. -He is overcome by Delilah .- Birth of Sam. uel .- God's extraordinary revelation to him.

Samson, being grown to man's estate, had a mind to travel, and see the country;

power to pray to and trust in him, is it at all likely that he is now seeking an occasion against thee, in order to destroy thee? Add to this the very light that shows thee thy wretchedness, ingratitude, and disobedience, is in itself a proof that he is waiting to be gracious to thee; and the penitential pangs thou feelest, and thy bitter regret for thy unfaithfulness, argue that the light and fire are of God's own kindling, and are sent to direct and refine, not to drive thee out of the way and destroy thee. Nor would he have told thee such things of his love, mercy, and kindness, and unwillingness to destroy sinners, as he has told thee in his sacred word, if he had been determined not to extend his mercy to thee.

* This is a Hebrew phrase, and it is often used upon particular occasions. Hence St Ambrose observes on Luke i. 17. 'He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias;' these two, the spirit and power (which is fortitude) are always joined together; for all fortitude, whether in attempting or suffering, is from the Holy Ghost,

that inspires us. + This camp of Dan was probably that place where the Danites pitched their camp in their expedition and enterprise against Laish; for it is not likely that the Philistines, who had the Israelites at that time under entire subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And if the reader looks back a little, this is another argument, that the story of Micah, and of the Danites' expedition, was transacted before Samson's time, though by the compilers of the bible they are related after.

to the Philistines; he happened to east his eyes on a beautiful Philistine, who so captivated the young hero, that he could not live without her. But in duty to his father and mother, he would not marry without their consent.

The fond parents expostulated with their son, on the unreasonableness of the match, in offering to marry into an uncircumcised family. But the amorous youth consulting his passion more than religion, was so pressing in his request to his parents, that their indulgence was not proof against it. But to gratify him, they went with him to Timnath, to see this beauty, and treat with her parents about the marriage.

During the course of their journey, it happened that Samson was at some distance from the company, when a young lion came in a mighty rage out of the vineyard of Timnath and attacked him.

Upon which the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, so that he slew the lion with as much ease as if it had been a kid.

After this action he went on and overtook his parents, but acquainted them not with this adventure of the lion.

Being arrived at Timnath, the match was soon concluded. And not long after, Samson, and his parents, taking another journey to solemnize their nuptials; and in their way to Timnath, Samson remembering this place where he had encountered with the lion, his curiosity led him to see what was become of the carcase; when, to his great surprise, he found a swarm of bees, with some honey, of

of It is an opinion commonly received among the ancients, that bees were propagated in two

It is not improbably thought, that the place which is called Timnah, Josh. xv. 10. and Timnatha, Josh. xix. 43., were the same place. It was assigned at first to the tribe of Judah, but afterwards to the tribe of Dap, and was, in all likelihood, the place whither Judah, the patriarch of the tribe that was called after him, went up to his sheep-shearers, Gen. xxxviii. 12 .- Wells's Geo-

on eating; and when he overtook his parents, he gave them some of it, but did not inform them from whence he had it.

Being arrived at Timnath, Samson entertained the relations, on both sides, for seven days; and to grace the nuptials the more, his wife's kindred brought thirty of their prime youth to bear him company.*

which, taking some in his hands, he went | To these young men, Samson, during the wedding-feast, proposed a riddle, which was this, 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.'+

> He gave them seven days to expound the riddle in, upon condition that if they expounded it, he would give them thirty garments, and as many shirts; but if

ways, either by those of their own species, or in the cavities of a dead carcase. Their opinion is beautifully stated by Virgil, thus translated by Dryden :-

"Behold a prodigy! for, from within The broken bowels, and the bloated skin, A buzzing noise of bees his ears alarms, Straight issuing thro' the sides assembling swarms! Dark as a cloud they make a wheeling flight, Then on a neighbouring tree descending light, Like a large cluster of black grapes they show, And make a large dependance from the bough."

This opinion, however, is directly contradicted by another, which was held by some writers of the greatest reputation in ancient times. Aristotle taught, that the bee will not light upon a dead carcase, nor taste the flesh. Varro asserts, that she never sits down in an unclean place or upon any thing which emits an unpleasant smell. They are never seen, like flies, feeding on blood or flesh; while wasps and hornets all delight in such food, the bee never touches a dead body. So much they dislike an impure smell, that when one of them dies, the survivors immediately carry out the carcase from the hive, that they may not be annoyed by the effluvia. The discovery which Samson made, when he went down to Timnath, may seem to contradict the latter, and confirm the former opinion: but it is not said the swarm was generated in the carcase of the lion; but only that Samson found them there; nor is it said that the lion had been recently killed, and that the carcase was in a state of putrefaction: the contrary seems to be intimated by the phrase 'after a time,' literally, 'after days,' one of the most common expressions in scripture for a year. Hence the lion was killed a whole year before this visit to Timnath, when he discovered the swarm in the carcase. But the flesh of the carcase, which Samson left in the open field a whole year, the prey of wild beasts and ravenous birds, must have been entirely consumed long before his return, or so completely dried by the violent heat of the sun, that nothing but the skeleton, or exsiccated frame remained. Within the bare, or withered enclosure of the bones, which had exhaled their last putrid effluvia, the swarm, in perfect consistency with their usual delicacy, might construct their cells and deposit their honey This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of Herodotus, who declares that bees have swarmed in dry bones.—Paxton's Illust.

* During the time of the marriage-feast, which, for a virgin, lasted seven, but for a widow, only three days, it was customary among the Jews to

have a chosen set of young men, whom the Greeks called paranymphs, to keep the bridegroom company; as also a certain number of young women were about the bride all this time. These young men were generally of the bridegroom's relations and acquaintance; but, at Samson's marriage, they belonged to his wife's family, and were sent, as some of the Jews think, not so much to do him honour at the time of his nuptials, as to be a guard over him, lest he should make any disturbance, of which the Philistines were afraid, when they understood that he was a man of so much strength and might .- Lamy's Introduction.

† This was scarcely a fair riddle; for unless the fact to which it refers were known, there is no rule of interpretation by which it can be found out. We learn from the Scholiast, on Aristophanes, that it was a custom among the ancient Greeks to propose at their festivals, riddles, enigmas, or very obscure sayings, both curious and difficult; and to give a recompense to those who found them out, which generally consisted in either a festive crown, or a goblet full of wine. Those who failed to solve them were condemned to drink a large portion of fresh water, or of wine mingled with sea-water, which they were compelled to take down at one draught, without drawing their breath, their hands being tied behind their backs. Sometimes they gave the crown to the deity in honour of whom the festival was made: and if none could solve the riddle, the reward was given to him who proposed it.—Dr \hat{A} . Clarke.

† Many of the Arabian inhabitants of Palestine and Barbary wear no shirts, but go almost entirely naked, or with only a cloth cast about their bodies, or a kind of mantle. It is not improbable, that the poorer inhabitants of Judea were clothed in much the same manner as the Arabs of those countries in modern times, having no shirts, but only a sort of mantle to cover their naked bodies. If this be just, it greatly illustrates the promise of Samson to give his companions thirty sheets, or as it is more properly rendered, thirty shirts, if they could discover the meaning of his riddle. It cannot be imagined they were what we call sheets, for Samson might have slain thirty Philistines near Ashkelon, and not have found one sheet; or if he slew them who were carrying their beds with them on their travels, as they often do in present times, the slaughter of fifteen had been sufficient, for in the East, as in other countries, every bed is provided with two sheets; but he slew just thirty; in order to obtain thirty sedinim or shirts. If this meaning of the term be admitted, the deed of Samsame number.

The young men, not knowing how to expound the riddle, applied themselves to his wife, and persuaded her to discover the meaning of it. After much importunity she prevailed upon her husband, who was so weak as to trust her with it, and she immediately told it to those young men, who came to Samson at the end of the seven days, and said, 'What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?

Samson was satisfied his wife had discovered the secret; for he knew he told it nobody else; and therefore to let them know he was sensible of foul play in the matter, he with indignation replied, 'If you had not plowed with my heifer, you could not have expounded my riddle.'

Then yielding his wager lost, he prepared to pay it; and going to Ashkelon,* a city of the Philistines, he slew thirty men, whose garments he gave to those that had expounded the riddle.

Being incensed against the Philistines for this unfair dealing about the riddle, he left Timnath, and returned to his father's But though he had entertained a

son must have been very provoking to the Philistines; for since only people of more easy circumstances wore shirts, they were not thirty of the common people that he slew, but thirty persons of

figure and consequence. The same word is used by the prophet Isaiah, in his description of the splendid and costly dress in which people of rank and fashion then delighted, rendered in our translation fine linen; which seems to place it beyond a doubt that they were persons of rank that fell by the hand of Samson on that occasion .- Paxton. * It is a city in the land of the Philistines sit-

uated between Azoth and Gaza, upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea, about five hundred and twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem. It is said to have been of great note among the Gentiles, for a temple dedicated to Dirceto, the mother of Semiramis, here worshipped in the form of a mermaid; and for another temple of Apollo, where Herod, the father of Antipater, and grandfather of Herod the Great, served as priest. The place subsists to this day, but is now very inconsiderable. Some mention there is made of the wine of Ashkelon, and the cypress-tree, (a shrub that was anciently in great esteem, and very common in this place,) but modern travellers say no such thing of t now .- Calmet and Wells

they did not, they should give him the just resentment against the Philistines, vet he retained a fondness for his wife, to whose weakness he did not so much impute the discovery of the riddle, as to the fraud of her countrymen.

> Some time after, he returned to Timnath to visit his wife, and as a token of his affection, he brought a kid with him for a present; and preparing to go to bed to her, her father would not permit him, urging for excuse, that he thought he slighted her, and therefore had given her in marriage to one of his companions.+ But if he pleased, her youngest sister, who was more beautiful, was at his service.

> Such a circumstance could not fail of exasperating Samson to a great degree, and he therefore determined on a severe revenge, which he took care to execute.

> Having found means to catch three hundred foxes, t which he tied two and

> + I suppose to one of the thirty that they had provided to bear him company at the wedding; and, it is very probable, as a reward of the treachery in discovering the secret of the riddle.

[†] This narrative has frequently been made the butt of ridicule by the unbeliever in divine revelation, who has asked with an air of triumph, how could Samson catch so many foxes in so short a time; and when caught, how could he make them the instruments of his revenge on the Philistines in the manner which the story represents? these questions we think several satisfactory replies have been given; but as they are still pertinaciously urged, it becomes our business again to show, that they possess no weight, as militating against the claims which the history presents to our belief. That the species of fox called Jackal is very numerous in the East, is attested by the most respectable travellers. Volney, whose impartiality as a witness in favour of scripture facts will not be disputed, says, "The wolf and the real fox are very rare; but there is a prodigious quantity of the middle species named shacal, which in Syria is called wanwee, from its howl; they go in And again: "Jackals are concealed by droves." hundreds in the gardens, and among ruins and tombs." Bellonius likewise asserts that they may be seen in troops of two or three hundred, prowling about in quest of their prey: and Morizen, who travelled in Palestine, says that foxes swarm in that country, and that very great numbers of them lurk in hedges and ruinous buildings. We ask, then, where was the difficulty for Samson to procure three hundred of these animals, especially as the time during which he had to provide them for his purpose is not limited to a week, or a month? Besides this, it should be recollected, that Samson at this time sustained the highest

two together, by the tails, with lighted torches to them, and drove them into the standing corn, by which means he burnt not only the corn but the vineyards and olive-trees.

office in the commonwealth, and consequently could be at no loss for persons to assist him in this singular enterprise. Having secured the instru-ments by which he designed to ruin the property of the oppressors of his country, the pext thing for consideration is the method by which he effected his purpose. Here we shall avail ourselves of the aid of the late ingenious editor of Calmet. In considering the circumstances of this narrative, Mr Taylor suggests, that there is some attention due to the nature and uses of the torches, or flambeaux, or lamps, employed by Samson in this procedure; and, perhaps, could we identify the nature or form of these, the story, he adds, might be relieved from some of its uncouthness. Now, these lamps, or burners, were placed between two jackals, whose tails were tied together, or at least, there was a connection formed between them by a cord; possibly, then, this cord was of a moderate length, and this burner being tied in the middle of it, it had something of the effect which we have seen among ourselves, when wanton malice has tied to the tail of a dog crackers, squibs, &c. which being fired, have worried the poor animal to his den, where, supposing them still to burn, they might set all around them on fire. We know it is the nature of the jackal to roam about dwellings and outhouses; this would lead them to where the corn of the Philistines was stored; which being ignited, would communicate the conflagration in every direction besides this, the fire giving them pain, they would naturally fight each one his associate, to which he was tied. This would keep them among the corn longer than usual: and few pairs thus coupled would agree to return to the same den, as they had formerly occupied in the mountains; so that nothing could be better adapted to produce a general conflagration than this expedient of combustion-communicating jackals. Vulpinaria, or, 'Feast of the Foxes,' celebrated by the Romans, was derived on all probability from this event: an account of which is thus given by Dr Adam Clarke.—" It was a custom in Rome, celebrated in the month of April, to let loose a number of foxes in the circus, with lighted flambeaux on their backs; and the Roman people took pleasure in seeing these animals run about till roasted to death by the flames with which they were enveloped. Ovid wishes to know what the origin of this custom was, and is thus informed by an old man of the city of Carseoli: 'A frolicksome young lad, about ten years of age, found, near a thicket, a fox that had stolen away many fowls from the neighbouring roosts. Having enveloped his body with hay and straw, he set it on fire, and let the fox loose. The animal, in order to avoid the flames, took to the standing corn which was then ready for the sickle; and the wind, driving the flames with double violence, the crops were everywhere consumed. Though this transaction

The Philistines understanding it was Samson, son-in-law to the Timnite, that had done this mischief, because his father-in-law had taken away his wife, came in revenge to Timnath, and burnt Samson's wife and her father.

This gave Samson fresh occasion of quarrelling with the Philistines, and he was so far from concealing his resentment, or using any stratagem to be revenged on them, that he openly declared that he would have satisfaction, which he forthwith did in a great slaughter of them.

Samson, persuaded that so rigorous a procedure must inflame the already incensed Philistines, in order to secure himself from their resentment, took up his residence in the top of the rock Etam; * which when the Philistines un-

is long since gone by, the commemoration of it still remains; for by a law of this city, every fox that is taken is burnt to death. Thus the nation awards to the foxes the punishment of being burnt alive, for the destruction of the ripe corn formerly occasioned by one of these animals.' Both Serrarius and Bochart reject this origin of the custom given by Ovid; and insist that the custom took its rise from the burning of the Philistines' corn by Samson's foxes. The origin ascribed to the custom by the Carseolian they consider as too frivolous and unimportant to be commemorated by a national festival. The time of the observation does not accord with the time of harvest about Rome and in Italy, but it perfectly accords with the time of harvest in Palestine, which was at least as early as April. Nor does the circumstance of the fox wrapped in hay and let loose, the hay being set on fire, bear any proper resemblance to the foxes let loose in the circus with burning brands on their backs. These learned men therefore conclude that it is much more natural to suppose that the Romans derived the custom from Judea, where probably the burning of the Philis-tines' corn might, for some time, have been annually commemorated. The whole account is certainly very singular, and has not a very satisfactory solution in the old man's tale, as related by the Roman poet. All public institutions have had their origin in facts; and if, through the lapse of time or loss of records, the original facts be lost, we may legitimately look for them in cases where there is so near a resemblance as in that above."-See Carpenter and Clarke.

* Palestine, being a mountainous country, had many rocks, which were part of the strength of the country; for in times of danger the people retired to them, and found refuge against sudden irruptions of their enemies. When the Benjamites were overcome and almost exterminated by the encamped there, demanding Samson of the inhabitants, that they might have satisfaction of him for the wrong he had done them.

The men of Judah, dreading the consequence of this invasion, immediately detached three thousand men of their tribe, to go and take Samson, and say to him, Didst thou not know that we are subject

other tribes they secured themselves in the rock Rimmon; and during the oppression of Israel by the Midianites, they were forced to hide them-selves in cavities of the rocks. Samson, we are here told, took his station in the rock Etam, whence he suffered himself to be dislodged by the persuasion of his brethren, not by the force of his enemies; and David, it is said, repeatedly hid himself in the caves of rocks. It appears that rocks are still resorted to, in the East, as places of security, and some of them are even capable of sustaining a siege, at least equal to any the Philistine army could have laid to the residence of Samson. So we read in De la Roque, p. 205. "The Grand Seignior, wishing to seize the person of the emir, gave orders to the pacha to take him prisoner: he accordingly came in search of him, with a new army, in the district of Choui; which is a part of mount Lebanon, wherein is the village of Gezan, and close to it the rock which served for retreat to the emir. It is named in Arabic Magara Gezan, i. e. 'the cavern of Gezan,' by which name it is famous. The pacha pressed the emir so closely, that this unfortunate prince was obliged to shut himself up in the cleft of a great rock, with a small number of his officers. The pacha besieged him here several months; and was going to blow up the rock by a mine, when the emir capitulated." Observe, too, that this cleft in the rock is called a cavern; so that we are not obliged always to suppose, that what the scripture calls caves or caverns were under ground; though such is the idea conveyed by our English word. We may remark also, that before the invention of gunpowder, fastnesses of this kind were, in a manner, absolutely impregnable; and, indeed, we have in Bruce accounts of very long sieges sustained by individuals and their families, or adherents, upon rocks; and which at last terminated by capitulation. The number of caves and dwelling places in rocks, which late travellers have discovered, as well in parts of Judea as in Egypt, greatly exceeds what had formerly been supposed. Many of these are still occupied as retreats by the inhabitants; and Denon gives an account of skirmishes and combats, fought in the grottoes or caverns of Egypt, by the Arab residents, against their invaders under Bonaparte. On the east of the Jordan, as Seetzen reports, entire families, with their cattle and flocks, take possession of caves and caverns in rocks and secluded places, where they are not easily discovered, and whence they could not easily be dislodged .- Calmet.

derstood, they marched into Judah, and to the Philistines? Why then hast thou provoked them so much?' adding, 'that they were come to seize, and deliver him to the Philistines.'

> Samson knew his own strength, but would not use it against his countrymen; only obliging them by oath not to side with the Philistines against him, he gave them leave to bind him; upon which they brought him to the place where the Philistines lay encamped; who, seeing him brought bound, thought they had him secure, and went out shouting for joy to receive him.

> But before they could lay hands on him, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him so powerfully, that he broke the cords of his arms with as much ease as if they had been burnt flax; and looking about him for a weapon, he could find no better than a jaw-bone of an ass: * however

^{*} Though asses in Syria are both stronger and larger than what we have with us, and their bones consequently better fitted for such hard service as this, yet it must be owned, that it was by the wonderful strength that God infused into him, and not any aptitude of the instrument he made use of, that he was enabled to do all this execution, which is only incredible to those that do not consider the power of God, who can raise our natural strength to what degree he pleases, and, at the same time, enfeeble the spirits of those, who oppose his designs, in such a manner, that they shall have no power to help themselves. It must be owned, however, that there are some circumstances in this transaction, which might possibly intimidate the Philistines, and thereby contribute to facilitate the slaughter which Samson made among them. The people of Judah had now prevailed with him to suffer himself to be bound, and conducted to the Philistines' camp: the Philistines, as soon as they saw him coming, ran out with joy to receive him, and very likely forgot to take their arms with them, as knowing for certainty that he was safe enough now, and bound, as we say, to his good behaviour. But when, contrary to their expectation, they saw him first break the cords so easily and suddenly, and then coming upon them with such fury and vengeance, it is not unlikely, that this might put them in no small confusion, and, as they straggled about in their flight, give him the opportunity of slaying them one by one, as he came up with them. This, we must allow, is the highest instance of personal prowess that we any where read of; and yet profane historians inform us of other men, who, by their mere natural courage, unassisted by any divine power, have made great havoc among their enemies: for Flavius Vopiscus reports, that

being divinely inspired, he despatched a thousand of the Philistines.

The heat of this action made him so excessive thirsty, that he was ready to faint, and being in a place where there was no water to be had, he addressed himself to the Lord thus: 'Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; and shall I die with thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?'

God heard his complaint, and that this miraculous victory, gained by the hand of one man, and so poorly armed, as with nothing but the jaw-bone of an ass, might not be untainted, he as miraculously gratified the champion's thirst, by a supply of water from a rock, which never before produced any moisture; he clave a hollow rock called Mactes, which was at Lehi,* and water plentifully flowed from it, of which Samson having drank, his spirit came, and he revived.

The next evidence of the amazing power of Samson was at Gaza,† another

in the Sarmatic war, Aurelian slew forty-eight men in one day, and in several days nine hundred and fifty, which diminishes the wonder of this achievement of Samson's not a little; especially considering that the Philistines, in their surprise, might think that this was all a trick and management of his conductors to get so many unarmed men into their power, and that they too were ready to fall upon them, and assist him, in case they should make any opposition against their champion.—Stackhouse.

* This place had doubtless its appellation, Lehi, from this adventure of Samson's with the jawbone, and from this place God caused a spring to arise, that he might allay his hero's thirst. For it is incongruous to think that the jaw of an ass, or any other creature, could have subsisted to the time when the author of this book of Judges lived; or, that God should, out of the socket of one of its teeth, cause a stream of water to flow by one continual useless miracle. It must then be a mistake in our version, to render the words, 'God clave an hollow place, which was in the jaw,' when they should be translated, 'which was in Lehi.' For the truth of the matter is, that though this jaw be long extinct and gone, yet those who have travelled through this part of Palestine, inform us, that in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, where Lehi very likely stood, the fountain, which arose upon this occasion, is still remaining, and called 'the fountain of the jaw,' to this day.

+ This city was by Joshua made part of the tribe of Judah, but, after him, it fell into the hands

city of the Philistines, where he took up his lodging in a house of public entertainment.

He was not long concealed here; for the inhabitants of the place having notice of him, beset the house; and watching for

of the Philistines, and was one of their five principalities, situated between Raphia and Ashkelon, towards the southern extremity of the promised land. The advantageous situation of this place was the cause of the many revolutions to which it became subject. First of all it belonged to the Philistines, but, in Joshua's time, was conquered by the Hebrews. In the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, it recovered its liberty, but was conquered by Hezekiah. It was made subject to the Chaldeans, when they reduced Syria and Phœnicia; and afterwards fell into the hands of the Persians. They were masters of it when Alexander besieged, took, and demolished it. It afterwards rose again (but not near of the same magnitude) under the name of Majuma, which underwent as many vicissitudes as the former. The kings of Egypt had it for some time in possession; Antiochus the Great took, and sacked it; the Asmoneans, or Maccabees, took it several times from the Syrians; Alexander Jannæus, king of the Hebrews, destroyed it; Gabinius repaired it; Augustus gave it to Herod the Great; Constantine gave it the name of Constantia, with many independent privileges, in honour of his son; but the Emperor Julian de-stroyed, and deprived it of all. Dr Wittman gives the following description of the modern town: "Gaza is situated on an eminence, and is rendered picturesque by the number of fine minarets which rise majestically above the buildings, and by the beautiful date trees interspersed. A very fine plain commences about three miles from the town, on the other side, in which are several groves of olive trees. Advancing toward Gaza, the view becomes still more interesting; the groves of olive trees extending to the town, in front of which is a fine avenue of these trees. About a mile distant from the town is a commanding height. The soil is of a superior quality. Much pasturage. On the east side of the town is a small gateway, near to which, it is said, Samson performed his exploit of carrying away the gate of the city; and where he threw down the building which killed him and his adversaries. The suburbs of Gaza are composed of wretched mud huts; but the interior of the town contains buildings superior in appearance to those generally met with in Syria. The streets are of a moderate breadth: many fragments of statues, columns, &c. of marble, are seen in the town walls and other buildings. Ophthalmia and blindness are very prevalent. The suburbs and environs of Gaza are rendered extremely agreeable by a number of large gardens, cultivated with great care, on the north, south, and west of the town. Plantations of date trees, also, are numerous. The landing place of Gaza is an open beach, highly dangerous to boats, especially if laden, a heavy surf constantly beating on the shore. Quails are very abundant in the neighbourhood."—Calmet.

cluded they should have him in the morning, and then they would despatch him.

Samson, being informed of their design upon him, lay still till midnight; and then rising, took the gates of the city, with the two posts and bars, and laying them on his shoulders, carried them to the top of a hill, which looked toward Hebron,* and so escaped the danger that threatened

But a more fatal danger than this soon after befell him; for, falling in love with a beautiful woman that lived in the vale of Sorek, whose name was Delilah,+ he was so captivated with her charms, that he had little regard to his own safety.

The princes of the Philistines observing Samson's fondness, took advantage of it; and addressing themselves to Delilah, promised to give her from each of them eleven hundred shekels of silver, if she would entice him to discover to her wherein his great strength lay, that so

him all night at the gate of the city, con- | they might bind and punish him for the great mischief he had done them.

> So great a bribe easily prevailed with the woman to betray her lover, who, after much solicitation, told her, that he had been a Nazarite to God from his birth, and that no razor ever yet came upon his head; but if he should be shaven, his strength would be no more than that of a common man.

Delilah having thus extorted the great secret from him, t sent for the princes of the Philistines to come to her, assuring them that he had discovered the whole secret of his strength to her. They accordingly came and brought the money they had promised her; and she having lulled him to sleep, as his head lay on her lap, a man whom she had provided, shaved off the seven locks of his head; they rousing him, she said, 'The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!'

He, not knowing what was done, thought to stretch himself, as he used to do, (for as yet he knew not that the Lord had departed from him,) but he too soon discovered it by the loss of his strength.

The Philistines, seeing him now really disabled, seized him immediately; and to make sure of him, they put out his eyes, and bringing him to Gaza, they fettered him, and made him work in the prison.

The Philistines having apparently vanquished so formidable a foe, used their

^{*} The words in the text are, that 'he carried them up to the top of a hill, that is before Hebron, Judg. xvi. 3, but the word, which we render before does equally signify in the sight of Hebron; and therefore, since the distance between Gaza and Hebron is no less than twenty miles, it is more probable that the hill where Samson left these gates, lay between the two cities, and in view of both, that the inhabitants of one city might behold them to their confusion, and they of the other to their encouragement to hope for a future deliverance.-Patrick's Commentary.

[†] Sorek was a place in the land of Judea, famous for choice wines, and lay not above a mile and a half from Eshcol, from whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes for a sample of the fruitfulness of the country; but whether Delilah, who is said to live here, was a woman of Israel, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, or whether she was his wife, or a harlot only, is not expressed in her story. St Chrysostom and others are of opinion that he was married to her; but if so, some mention, one would think, should have been made of the marriage-ceremonies in this as well as in his former wife's case: nor can we think that the Philis-tines would have been so bold, as attempt to draw her into their party, and to bribe her to betray him into their hands, had she been his lawful wife. It appears indeed, by her whole behaviour, that she was a mercenary woman, who would do any thing to get money, and accordingly Josephus calls her a common prostitute of the Philistines.—Patrick's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.

[‡] There is a good deal of probability in Josephus's manner of telling this story, viz. that while they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an admiration of his wonderful deeds; and, having highly extolled them, desired him to tell her, how he came so much to excel all other men in strength. For we cannot to excel all other men in strength. For we cannot suppose, that she came bluntly upon him all at once, and desired to know, as it is in the text, 'wherewith he might be bound and afflicted. This had been discovering her wicked design against him at once, and defeating herself of an opportunity of betraying him; and therefore we must conclude, that the sacred history in this place, as it frequently does elsewhere gives us coult the as it frequently does elsewhere, gives us only the sum and substance of what Delilah said to her paramour, without taking notice of all the cunning and artful speeches wherewith she dressed it up.-Le Clerc's Commentary.

common method of festivity, and vainly offered oblations at the shrine of their god Dagon.*

When they had feasted awhile, and were grown merry, they called for Samson to make sport: upon which he was brought from the prison, and being placed between the two pillars that supported the roof, they made themselves sport with him.

Besides the great conflux of people that were in the house of Dagon at this solemnity, there were about three thousand on the roof, that came to be spec-

* The word Dagon is taken from the Phœnician root Dag, which signifies a fish; and accordingly the idol is usually represented (as the heathens do Tritons and Syrens) in the shape of a woman, with the lower parts of a fish. For this reason, learned men have imagined that Dagon was the same with Derceto, which the people of Ashkelon worshipped, and near which place there was a pond full of fish consecrated to this goddess, from which the inhabitants superstitiously abstained, out of a fond belief that Venus, having heretofore cast herself .nto this pond, was metamorphosed into a fish. The learned Jurieu is of another opinion, viz. that Dagon, whose termination is masculine both in sacred and profane writings, is always represented as a male deity, and may therefore very properly be thought to be the Neptune of the ancients. The Phænicians in particular, from whom both the Greeks and the Romans borrowed their gods, living upon the sea coast, and by their navigation and commerce gaining great advantages from that element, can hardly be supposed to want a deity to preside over it. Saturn and his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, were their principal idols: and, as Saturn was their Moloch, Jupiter their Baal, and Pluto their Baal-zebub, so have we reason to presume that Neptune was their Dagon. This, however, will not hinder us from supposing that there might be two deities, a male and a female, worshipped in the same country, and under the same figure or form; and that as the Pagan theology gives Jupiter a Juno to be his consort in heaven; and Pluto a Proserpine to keep him company in hell; so Neptune had his Amphitrite to be the partner of his liquid empire in the sea. According to this supposition the Dagon of Gaza or Ashdod must be Neptune, and the Derceto of Ashkelon, a few leagues distant, Amphitrite, the daughter of Doris and Qceanus. Nor can it be thought incongruous to suppose farther, that the universal god of the sea might, in one place, be represented as a male, as at Ashdod; and in another, as at Ashkelon, as a female, to signify the fecundity of that element, which produces and nourishesso many living creatures.—Le Clerc's Commentary, Calmet's Dictionary, and Jurieu, Histoire des Dogmes et Cultes.

tators of Samson's misery. By this time his hair was somewhat grown; and it is probable his strength began to return.

However, it is very likely these indignities offered him by the Philistines provoked him to the highest degree. Wherefore persuading the lad that guided him to set him so that he might feel both the pillars on which the house stood, on pretence of leaning on them to rest himself, he, with great earnestness, prayed to God to strengthen him but this one time, that he might be revenged of the Philistines for the loss of his eyes.

God heard his prayers, and gave him such a wonderful accession of strength, that, taking hold on the two pillars with both his hands, he bowed himself with all his might, at the same time saying, 'Let me die with the Philistines!'

He exerted his strength in such a manner, that, forcing the pillars from their bases, the house fell down upon all that were in it.+ So that Samson had a full

⁺ It is made a question whether the house, as it is called in scripture, which he pulled down, was the temple of Dagon, for whose honour this festival was appointed, or some other edifice. That it was not a common house is evident from the multitude of the people which it contained; and though the temples of the Philistines are supposed by some to have been of the same figure and make with those in Egypt, i. e. a kind of a rotunda, flat roofed, with a large portico without, and pillars within to sustain the building; yet this seems to be no more than a fiction, devoid of all authority, and accommodated to the purpose of solving this difficulty. It is not certain that the Egyptian temples were built in this manner, and much more probable it is, that this house of their famous god Dagon was made of stone; and though it wanted no proper supports, yet it is scarce supposeable that in a structure of this kind its whole weight should be supported by two pillars only, and these so very contiguous that Samson could lay hold on them both at one time. The most general opinion therefore is, that this was a structure which the Philistines made use of, upon such occasions as this, built all of wood, and supported by wooden pillars, in the form of the theatres, which in after times were in great request among the Romans. Towards the middle of this building, we may suppose that there were two large beams, upon which the weight of the whole structure lay; and that these beams were supported by two pillars, which stood in a manner contiguous to each other. So that as soon as Samson had moved and unsettled these, down must the principals, and with them

revenge on his enemies, and put an end to his miserable condition, slaying more at his death than in the height of his strength.

the whole building come. The only remaining difficulty is, how a building made of wood, and supported by two pillars only, should be able to contain such a multitude of men and women. But whoever reads Pliny's Natural History, will therein find a description of two theatres, built by Curio, capable of containing a much greater number of people than the Philistines are here said to be, and yet—what was a wonder much greater than the two pillars here—whenever they were turned round, as they frequently were, to meet and make one amphitheatre, they both rested upon one hinge only, which, had it happened to slip, must have occasioned (as our author tells us) a much greater slaughter than what was at the battle of Cannæ; as by the actual fall of an amphitheatre built by Atilius, no fewer than fifty thousand persons (as Tacitus relates the story) were "tilled, wounded, and maimed.—Stackhouse.

killed, wounded, and maimed.—Stackhouse.

If any one should question the possibility of 3000 people being upon the roof of the temple in question, he may be referred to the accounts of the temples at Thebes in Upper Egypt, which have been given by all recent travellers; accounts, which, while they come to us authenticated in such a manner as to admit of no doubt in regard to their verity and correctness, at the same time present things apparently incredible, and contrary to all the philosophising of most speculative and theo-retical historians. The ruins of ancient Greece and Rome, so far as vastness and extent are concerned, dwindle into insignificance when compared with the astonishing remains of early architecture at Thebes. What is most confounding of all to that philosophising, in which historians of a sceptical cast are prone to indulge, is, that these mighty ruins are, beyond all doubt, the relics of architecture designed and executed in ages, when (as some popular writers admonish us to believe) men were not yet weaned from contending with the beasts of the forest for their lairs and for their acorns, nor but very little elevated above them. The ruins at Thebes present evidences of control over physical, mechanical power; of skill in architecture on a scale of surprising magnitude; and of art in mixing and laying on colours, that are fresh as if painted but yesterday, after having been laid on for more than thirty centuries; which confound and put to shame all that the arts and sciences, and the experience of three thousand years, have since been able to accomplish. So much for the rude-ness, and barbarity, and ignorance of the *primitive* ages. The Philistines, the near neighbours of the Egyptians, and their hearty coadjutors in poly-theism, might well have, and doubtless had, large temples as well as they; large enough to afford room for three thousand, and some of them not improbably for many more, to stand upon the roof. As to the strength of Samson, in tearing away pillars on which such enormous weight rested; those who disbelieve any thing which is miracul-

Thus died Samson, who is said to have judged Israel twenty years; and was rather a scourge to the Philistines than a deliverer of the Israelites. Yet he may be said to have begun to deliver Israel in this last action, though it cost him his life.

When his relations heard of his death, they came and brought him to his father's sepulchre, between Zorah and Ashdod, where they buried him.

From sacred history, the conduct of the Israelites, on the demise of Samson, seems to have devolved upon Eli, who was then high priest.

In the beginning of his reign Samuel the prophet was born, the son of Elkanah, a Levite, descended from Korah. He lived in the city of Ramah,* which be-

ous, will of course regard the whole as a mythos (or fable); those who admit the reality of miracles, will doubtless be ready to believe, that there was some supernatural aid afforded him in the case under consideration. A heavy blow was inflicted upon polytheism by the event in question, and on its votaries, who were the enemies of God's chosen people.—Stuart's Hebr. Chrystomathy.

Ramah signifies an eminence, or high situation, and is therefore an appellation given to several places that are built in this manner. This is said to have stood upon mount Ephraim, thereby to distinguish it from other towns, in different tribes, of the same denomination; and the reason why it is here called Ramathaim, in the dual number, is, as some imagine, because it was built upon two hills, which made it appear as a double city, and because it was situated on high, and had a watch-tower built in it, it therefore had the title of Zophim added to it. It stood upon the road that led from Samaria to Jerusalem; and for this reason as well as its advantageous situation, Baasha, king of Israel, caused it to be fortified that there might be no passage out of the land of Judah into that of Israel, but in St Jerome's days it was no more than a small village. Here it was that Samuel passed a great part of his time; for his mo-ther's dedication of him to the service of God did not confine him to Shiloh, after that God had called him out to a public employ, and appointed him his residence in a place more convenient for the execution of it.—Oriental geographers speak of this place as having formerly been the metro-polis of Palestine; and Mr Buckingham informs us, that every appearance of its ruins even now confirms the opinion of its having been once a considerable city. "Its situation, as lying immediately in the high road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, made it necessarily a place of great resort; and from the fruitfulness of the country around it, it must have two wives, Hannah and Peninnah; -the latter of whom had children, but the first none.

Elkanah, according to custom, once a year, went up to Shiloh, to worship and sacrifice to the Lord, taking his two wives and his children with him; where, after he had made his offerings, he gave presents to both his wives, but to Hannah, being his best beloved, he gave a double share of his favour.

This caused a jealousy between the two wives, and Peninnah, priding herself in her children, reproached Hannah for her sterility.* Her husband endeavoured to comfort her: but Hannah sought for it from a more powerful hand, addressing herself earnestly in prayer to the Lord, and vow-

been equally important as a military station or a depot for supplies, and as a magazine for the collection of such articles of commerce as were exported from the coast. In its present state, the town of Ramah is about the size of Jaffa, in the extent actually occupied. The dwellings of this last, however, are crowded together around the sides of a hill, while those of Ramah are scattered widely over the face of the level plain on which it stands. The style of building here is that of high square houses, with flattened domes covering them: and some of the old terraced roofs are fenced around with raised walls, in which are seen pyramids of hollow earthenware pipes, as if to give air and light, without destroying the strength of the wall itself. The inhabitants are estimated at little more than five thousand persons, of whom about one-third are Christians of the Greek and Catholic communion, and the remaining two-thirds Mohammedans, chiefly Arabs; the men of power and the military being Turks, and no Jews residing there. The principal occupation of the people is husbandry, for which the surrounding country is highly favourable; and the staple commodities produced by them are corn, olives, oil, and cotton, with some soap and coarse cloth made in the town. There are still remains of some noble subterranean cisterns at Ramah, not inferior either in extent or execution to many of those in Alexandria: they were intended for the same purpose, namely, to serve in time of war as reservoirs of water."— Patrick, Le Clerc, and Buckingham.

* Sterility was looked upon among the Jews as one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall any woman; insomuch that to have a child, though the mother immediately died thereupon, was accounted a less affliction than to have none at all. And to this purpose we may observe, that the midwife comforts Rachel in her labour, even though she knew her to lie at the point of death, in these terms, ' Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also,' Gen. xxxv. 17 .- Saurin.

longed to the tribe of Ephraim, with his | ing at the same time, that if he would bless her with a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life, and that no razor should come upon his head.

> Eli the priest, seeing her lips move, but not hearing her speak, supposed she was intoxicated with wine, and chid her for it; but finding himself mistaken, he turned his reproof into a blessing, praying to God to hear her petition.

> Being returned to Ramah, she conceived, and was in due time delivered of a son, whom she named Samuel, because she had 'asked him of God,' which his name implied.

Hannah, having weaned her little son, according to her promise brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh, with an . offering, and acquainted Eli that she was the woman that some time since had prayed to the Lord for a child, and that she came to perform her vow, which was to dedicate him to the service of the Lord.

On this occasion Eli gave thanks unto the Lord, for having heard and answered Hannah's prayer; and Hannah, in a holy rhapsody, did the same.

Elkanah and Hannah having performed their vow, prepared to return; and Eli, pronouncing a blessing upon them, said, 'The Lord give thee seed of the woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord,' meaning Samuel, whom they left behind with Eli, who put on him a linen ephod,+ and he served in the house of the Lord, as Eli had directed him.

After this, once a year, till he grew up, his mother, when she came to offer the yearly sacrifice, made him a little coat, and brought it to him.

[†] The ephod which the high priest wore was a very rich habit indeed, Exod. xxviii. 6. but there were other kinds of ephods, which not only priests and Levites, but even laymen, upon some occasions, wore, as we find in the instance of David, 2 Sam. yi. 14. which was not a sacred, but an honorary garment, (as we may call it,) and such as the high priest might order Samuel to wear, to distinguish him from some other inferior officers belonging to the tabernacle .- Patrick's Commentary.

Eli the priest had two sons, but very wicked; for, valuing themselves upon the authority and dignity of the priesthood, they domineered over the men, and debauched the women. And to such a height had their insolence grown, that not content with the portion of the flesh of the sacrifice which God had assigned them, they would seize what they liked best, and at what time they pleased. By this means the service of God grew contemptible in the eyes of the people, who grew indifferent whether they offered or not. But however heinous the sins of the priests might be, they did not excuse the people from guilt, in neglecting the service of the Lord.

The good old prophet had often heard of the conduct of his impious sons, yet did not restrain or punish them, as he that was both father and magistrate ought to have done, giving them only a slight reproof, which was so far from dissuading that they still persisted in their wicked practices.

At last a man of God came to Eli with a message, that threatened him and his household with ruin, for his careless and mild administration. First upbraiding him with ingratitude, for slighting the honour done his family, in investing the priesthood in it, threatening his sons Hophni and Phinehas, with death, which he foretold should happen at one and the same time.

And to show Eli the wretched poverty that his posterity should fall into, he added, that every one that should be left in his house, should come and crouch to a more faithful priest (whom the Lord would set up) for a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread; and shall say, 'Put me, I pray thee, in one of the priest's offices, that I may have a piece of bread to eat.'

Soon after this, it pleased God to give his old servant an awful denunciation of his judgment by a younger hand.

Samuel, being lodged in the further part of the tabernacle, among the Levites,

the Lord in the night called him by his name, who, as the manner was, answered, 'Here am I;' and starting up, ran to Eli's apartment, supposing he had called. But when Eli told him he had not called him, he went and lay down again. This was repeated three times; and Samuel began at last to be positive with Eli, that he really did call him.

This roused Eli, and made him think there was something extraordinary in it; which thought he communicated to Samuel, bidding him go to bed again; and directing him, that if the Lord should call him again, he should say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'

As Eli suspected, so it happened; and Samuel did as he directed him.

Then said the Lord to Samuel. 'All that I have spoken concerning Eli and his house I will perform; for I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity to which he is privy. Because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them; therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice, nor offering for ever.'

This sentence was so terrible, even to Samuel, though he had no share in it, that he was afraid to tell it to Eli; but Eli, now thoroughly awakened by the message he had received before, and the apprehension he now had that the Lord had revealed something like it to Samuel, obliged him to tell what the Lord had repeated to him.

Samuel obeyed, and informed him of the whole truth. To which poor Eli humbly submitted, saying, 'It is the Lord, let him do what he pleaseth.'

And now to the great comfort of Israel, God was pleased to appear again in Shiloh, and there revealed himself to Samuel. For as he grew up, both in stature as a man, and in grace as a man of God, the Lord was with him, and accomplished whatever he spoke by him; so that all Israel knew, from one end of the land to the other, that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord.

CHAPTER XI.

The Israelites are conquered by the Philistines.

—Eli's sons are punished; he breaks his neck.—Dagon falls before the ark of the Lord.

—On the repentance of the people, at the instigation of Samuel, they conquer the Philistines.—Samuel entertaineth Saul.—Anoints him prince over the Lord's inheritance.—Saul is chosen by lot.

THE Israelites being again blessed with a prophet, proposed to themselves great things, concluding that all they now undertook would succeed; and therefore being animated with this thought, they had a mind to try if they could not shake off the Philistine yoke. Wherefore, intending to fight them, they encamped in a place which was afterwards, upon better success, called Eben-ezer.*

The Philistines sat down by Aphek, a city of Judah, and in a short time the armies joined; but the Israelites, instead of victory, found the judgments of God denounced against priest and people, ready to fall on them; for in the action they lost four thousand of their men. The rest making an orderly retreat to their camp, the elders began to consider what might be the cause of this defeat; and fondly supposing it to be for want of having the ark with them, they resolved for the future to carry it with them in all their other expeditions.

Then they sent messengers to Shiloh, for Hophni and Phinehas, the priests, to bring the ark into the camp; which they forthwith did. And when the Israelites

saw the ark brought into the camp, they gave such a shout as made the earth ring, which so disheartened the Philistines that they were at the brink of despair, especially when they heard the true cause of this rejoicing.

The Israelites on the other hand were as fool-hardy as the Philistines were dejected. For, concluding themselves secure, under the protection of the ark, and not in the least doubting their success, they again offered the Philistines battle; who, in this engagement, slew thirty thousand of their foot, among which were Hophni and Phinehas, put the rest to flight, and, which was the terriblest blow of all, took the ark of God.

One of the soldiers of the tribe of Benjamin, seeing the day lost, made his escape from the field of battle, and came running to Shiloh with his clothes rent and earth upon his head; which in those countries were emblems of extreme sorrow for the greatest losses and misfortunes.

Notwithstanding old Eli's default, in bis administrations, which provoked God, he had a most zealous regard for the welfare of Israel and especially the ark of the Lord. Upon this account therefore he went and sat at the gate to hear (for he could not see) how affairs went: whilst he was sitting here, the foresaid Benjamite that escaped in the fight, having told the citizens how things went, there was a mighty outcry among them. Whereupon, Eli asking what was the meaning of that tumult, the Benjamite soldier was brought to him, who told him the Israelites were routed, his sons in the number of the slain. and the ark of the Lord taken.

Eli kept his seat till the last piece of news was told him, but then his spirits failing, he fell from his seat backwards; and being heavy as well as old, his neck broke with the fall, and he died, having judged Israel forty years.

His son Phinehas had a wife at this time, who being big with child, and near her time, hearing of the death of her fa-

^{*} This place had not this name till about twenty years after, 1 Sam. iv. 1., when Samuel fought with the Philistines, and gave them a total overthrow, and set up a monument of his victory—for the proper name signifies 'the Stone of Help'—in the field of battle, which lay on the north border of Judah, not far from Mizpeh; and Aphek, where the Philistines encamped, must not be far distant from it.—Wells's Geography.

ther and her husband, and the loss of the the ground, but his head and palms of ark, fell in labour; and being delivered of a son, with her dying breath she named him Ichabod; which signifies, 'no glory,' adding, as a reason of giving the child this name, 'That the glory is departed from Israel,' which she meant by the taking of the ark of God.

The Philistines having cleared the field, and carried off the plunder, brought the ark to one of their principal cities, named Ashdod,* and placed it in the temple of Dagon near to the idol; whom the next morning they found fallen down upon his face before the ark of the Lord. They set him in his place, and next day came in again, and not only found him fallen to

· The Philistines were descendants from Mizraim, the father of the Egyptians, and so, in all probability, having their first settlement in Egypt, or the parts adjoining, lay to the south-west of the land of Canaan. In process of time, however, they made inroads upon Canaan, and in Abra-ham's days, had got possession of a good part of the territories, which lay along the western coasts of the Mediterranean sea. This tract of ground was divided into five principalities, or little kingdoms, namely, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron; which, for the better understanding of some particulars related of the ark, during its stay in this country, it will not be improper to describe all together. The city of Gaza (from which the territory took its name) stood, as it were, on the very south-west angle, or corner of the land of Canaan; but of this place we have spoken before. To the north of Gaza lay next the city of Askelon, called by the Greeks, Ascalon, and of great note among the Gentiles for a temple dedicated to Derceto, the mother of Semiramis, who was here worshipped in the form of a mermaid. To the north of Ascalon lay Ashdod, called by the Greeks, Azotus, and famous for the temple of the god Dagon, whereof we have taken notice before. Still more to the north lay Gath, memorable for being the birthplace of the giant Goliath, whom David slew, and of several others of the same gigantic race. It was dismantled by Ozias, king of Judah, and finally laid waste by Hazael, king of Syria; however it recovered itself, and retained its old name, in the days of Eusebius and St Jerome, who place it about four miles from Eleutheropolis, in the way to Lidda. The most northern of these cities, still upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea, was Ekron, called by the Greeks, Accaron, a place of great wealth and power, and famous for the idolatrous worship of Beelzebub, who had here a celebrated temple and oracle. But of this idol we shall have occasion to say more, when we come to the reign of Ahaziah, king of Judah, who sent in his illness to consult him .- Wells's Geography.

his hands broken off, and lying on the threshold, only his lower part was left entire. Whence a superstitious custom arose among the Philistines, that neither priests nor people would tread upon the threshold.+

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In order to convince the idolatrous Israelites that the cause was no longer between the Philistines and the Israelites, but between God and Dagon, the Lord laid his heavy judgments on Ashdod, and all the coast towns thereabouts, afflicting the people with the piles, and destroying at the same time the country with mice. The people of Ashdod were sensible this was a judgment from the God of Israel for taking and detaining the ark; therefore consulting what to do, the princes of the Philistines, partly to redress the complaints of the Ashdodites, but chiefly to carry the ark about in triumph, sent it to Gath, where the same judgments pursued the detainers of it. Whereupon they removed it to Ekron, but the inhabitants no sooner saw it, than they cried out, 'They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to slay us and our people.'

Whilst the ark was here, not only the piles, but a deadly plague attended the people; wherefore calling the priests, they resolved not to send the ark away empty,

⁺ It is somewhat strange, that when the Philistines saw their Dagon cast down before the ark of God, with his head and hands broken off, they should not thence infer that he was no more than a vain idol: but instead of that, we find them honouring the thresholds, whereby he received these maims, as if they had been consecrated, or some divinity infused into them, from the mere touch of this idol. This is a sore instance of blindness and infatuation; but it is no more than what other heathen nations fell into. For, whether the custom took its first rise from this practice of the Philistines, or not, it is certain, that among the Romans the threshold was consecrated to the goddess Vesta, and those which belonged to temples were always held in the highest veneration. Nav. at this very day, there are some mosques in Persia, whose thresholds are covered over with plates of silver, and which the people are not allowed to tread on; for that is a crime which cannot be expiated without undergoing very severe pains and penalties .- Calmet's Commentary.

but to prepare a trespass-offering for the atonement of their sacrilege, which was to consist of five golden emerods, * and five golden mice, according to the number of the plagues he had inflicted on them: for

* It was a prevailing opinion among the heathens, that the only way to appease their gods, when offended at them, was to offer them presents; and therefore no wonder that the Philistine priests hit upon this thought: and why they sent, along with the ark, the images of the parts which were afflicted with this sore disease, might proceed from a common custom likewise among the heathens, of consecrating to their gods such monuments of their deliverance, as represented the evils from whence they had escaped, or the members which had been disordered. Thus the people of Athens, having been afflicted with a shameful disease for not receiving the mysteries of Bacchus with a proper reverence, and consulting the oracle what they were to do, in order to have it removed, were directed to make figures of the part affected, and present them to the god, which gave them this counsel: and accordingly the Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the emerods and mice, wherewith they were sorely infested, took the same method to get quit of them. It is still a practice among the heathens-as Tavernier relates in his travels, page 92-when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, for him to bring the figure of the member afflicted, either in gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, and to offer it to the idol in a most submissive manner .-Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.

† This animal is so very diminutive, that the Jewish naturalist places it among the reptiles, refusing it the honour of appearing among the quadrupeds. But, small and apparently insignificant as it is, in the oriental regions it often produces greater calamities than are experienced from all the beasts of prey with which they are infested. Formidable by its activity, its voraciousness, and its countless numbers, it lays waste the fields of Palestine and Syria, devours their harvests, and spreads famine and wretchedness among the helpless in-habitants. The extent and severity of the distress in which its ravages frequently involve the people of those countries, are sufficiently attested by the offering of five golden mice, from the lords of the Philistines, to appease the wrath of God, and avert the plague under which they had so greatly suffer-The account of this transaction is recorded in the first book of Samuel, and runs in these terms: Then said they, what shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice, which mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your lands.' These words undoubtedly intimate, that Palestine was very often visited by this scourge, and that the sufferings of its inhabitants were very severe. The devastations of this little destructive

that by thus acknowledging the glory of the Lord of Israel, he would rid them of the plagues he had inflicted on them: for why, said the priests, should you be obstinate, as the Egyptians were, to your own destruction? Then directing them to provide a new cart, and two milch kine, that never had been yoked, and fasten them to the cart, without their calves, they bid them lay the ark on the cart, and put the golden emerods and mice in a coffer by the side of the ark, and send them away; but cautioned them strictly to observe which way the cart went; for if it went by the way of Bethshemesh, they might conclude that it was the God of

creature were so frequent, so extensive, and followed by consequences so dreadful, that even the unlightened Philistines considered them as an immediate judgment from God himself. But this terrible scourge was not peculiar to Palestine: Strabo mentions that so vast a multitude of mice sometimes invaded Spain, as to produce a destruc-tive pestilence; and in Cantabria, the Romans, by setting a price on a certain measure of these animals, escaped with difficulty from the same calamity. In other parts of Italy the number of field mice was so great, that some of the inhabitants were forced to leave the country. In Thrace, the frogs and mice sometimes united their hordes and compelled the inhabitants to seek new settlements. In modern times, instances of the same calamity are not wanting. About the beginning of the twelfth century, innumerable swarms of locusts and mice, during four successive years, so completely ravaged that country, as to produce almost a total failure of the necessaries of life. So great and general was the distress of the people, that a kind of penitential council was held at Naplouse, in the year 1120, for the reformation of manners, and to invoke the mercy of the Almighty, who had been provoked by their sins to inflict upon them such terrible judgments .- Script. Illust.

‡ Bethshemesh was a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 10.) afterwards given to the Levites, xix. 22. 1 Sam. vi. 12. In Eusebius it is placed ten miles from Eleutheropolis, east, in the way to Nicopolis or Emails; that is, about 30 miles north-west of Jerusalem. Reland thinks we should not distinguish Hirshemesh in Dan, from Bethshemesh in Judah; but the passages he produces (Josh. xx. 41. compared with 1 Kings iv. 7. where Irshemesh is placed as parallel to Bethshemesh) convince us that they are not the same city. Hirshemesh signifies the 'City of the sun,' and Bethshemesh signifies the 'House of the sun,' As the tribes of Dan and Judah were adjacent, the same city is reckoned sometimes to one tribe, sometimes to the other.

went not that way, they should look upon all these judgments only as common accidents.

The Philistines sending the ark away in this manner, the kine that drew it went on lowing directly to Bethshemesh. The five princes of the Philistines followed at a distance to see what would become of it, who, when they saw it arrive safely at Bethshemesh, returned to Ekron. The Bethshemites, who were reaping in the valley, seeing the ark, were overjoyed.

The kine having drawn the cart into the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, stood still there by a great stone, called the Stone of Abel, which the Levites seeing, they took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was in it, and laid them upon the great stone. Then cleaving the wood of the cart to make a fire with, they offered the kine for a burnt-offering unto the Lord.

But some of the Bethshemites, whether moved by joy or curiosity, took the liberty of looking into the ark, contrary to the law; for which the Lord smote fifty thousand, and threescore, and ten of them,*

Israel that had plagued them; but if it | which so terrified the rest, that they cried out, 'Who is able to stand before the holy Lord God? And to whom shall he go from us?"

> This made them desirous of removing the ark. So they sent to Kirjath-jearim, to acquaint them that the Philistines had sent back the ark of the Lord, and desired them to come and fetch it.

> Accordingly they came, and conveyed the ark to the house of Abinadab on the hill, whose son Eleazer was consecrated to keep it, where it abode twenty years.

> Samuel, upon the death of old Eli, and the loss of the ark of God, at this critical juncture, took upon him the conduct of the idolatrous Israelites.

> At the end of twenty years, finding in the people a good disposition to repent, and return to the Lord, he exhorted them to put away the strange gods, Baal and Ashtaroth, and only to serve the Lord, promising, that if they would do so, they should be delivered from the Philistines.

Then ordering all Israel to meet him at Mizpeh, they came to him there. Whilst

sand men;' where there is plainly wanting some particle or other, to make the sense complete. They observe further, that if this is to be taken for a total sum, the order of the words is plainly inverted, and that the thousands should go before the inferior numbers, as is usual in all languages; and therefore, since there is a manifest defect in the copy, they think it not amiss to supply it with the particle Dout of, which, in many other instances is known to be omitted, and here makes the sense complete; namely, that of the people of Bethshemesh, for their irreverence to the ark, he smote 'seventy men out of fifty thousand.' For, though fifty thousand men can hardly be supposed in so small a place; yet, upon hearing of the arrival of the ark, the country might flock in from other parts, and in a few days, make up that number; and though, possibly, most of them might be guilty of the same profane rudeness, yet God, in his great clemency, might punish no more than seventy of them, and that on purpose to deter others from the like irreverence. For it is not unlikely, that these people might hold the ark in more contempt, since the time that it had been conquered, as it were, and led captive by their enemies; and for this reason, God might the rather exert his vin-dictive arm, on purpose to teach them, that this symbol of his presence had lost none of its miraculous power by the ill usage it had met with in its absence.—Stackhouse.

^{*} It was a particular prohibition, that not only the common people, but even the Levites them-selves should not dare to look into the ark, or any other of the holy utensils belonging to the service of God, upon pain of death; and the severity of this law will not seem so unreasonable, when it is considered, that in every nation it was always accounted a great profaneness, and frequently attended with exemplary punishments, for such as were not initiated, to obtrude into the mysteries of religion; and that, if the Philistines, for their irreverence to the ark, were treated with less rigour than the Bethshemites, it was because the former were not instructed in the laws of God, nor obliged to observe them. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that there is a mistake in our translation, as well as in several others. Bethshemesh is a place of no great note in sacred history, and by Josephus it is called no more than a village; and therefore it is hardly conceivable how it could contain such a number as ' fifty thousand and threescore and ten' inhabitants, or why God, who is goodness itself, should make such a slaughter among those who received his ark with so much joy, and testified their gladness by their oblation of sacrifices. To solve this difficulty therefore, some have observed, that the words in the original, and according to their natural construction, stand thus :- He smote of the people 'threescore and ten men, fifty thou-

they humbled themselves with prayer and fasting, and offered libations,* the Philistines having notice of this general meeting, came in arms, and put them into a

great consternation.

The Israelites thus frighted, begged of Samuel to intercede for them to the Lord. Samuel thereupon took a suckling lamb, offered it whole for a burnt-offering, and prayed to the Lord for Israel, whose prayer was so effectual, that as the Philistines came to attack Israel, at that instant the Lord sent down such a peal of thunder on the Philistines, just as they were ready to engage, as threw them into confusion.

† Josephus gives us this account of the whole transaction:—"In some places God shook the foundations of the earth under the feet of the scorched to such Philistines, so that they could not stand without staggering: in others, it opened, and swallowed —Jewish Antig.

The Israelites, taking advantage of their disorder, gained a mighty victory: and pursued them from Mizpeh beyond Beth-shan. From which time the Philistines came not into the country of the Israelites, who recovered the towns those people had taken from them from Ekron to Gath.

Samuel, in memory of this great deliverance, set up a monumental stone, between Mizpeh and Shen, calling it Ebenezer, that is, 'the stone of help.'

After this, Samuel, for the better administration of justice, took a circuit through Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, returning every year to Ramah. But growing in years, and unable to travel, he constituted his two sons, Joel and Abiah, judges over Israel; who, degenerating from their good father, were corrupted with bribes, and acted unjustly.

Upon this, the elders of Israel assembling, went in a body to Ramah, and complained to Samuel. Their cause of complaint was just; but when they took upon them to go farther, and to dictate to Samuel how to redress it, they forfeited his love and God's care.

They wanted, not only their grievances redressed, but to have the form of their government altered, insisting upon Samuel's inability to govern them, by reason of his great age, as much as upon the injustice of his sons. And seeing other nations were governed by kings, nothing would please them, but they must have a king.

This insolent demand was unpleasing to Samuel, who, finding he could not dissuade them, consulted the Lord; who ordered him to give them a king, as they desired, but reproached them for their ingratitude both to him and Samuel. And to warn them of the dangerous conse-

^{*} The words in our translation run thus :- 'And they gathered to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord,' 1 Sam. vii. 6; but what we are to understand by this water, the conjectures of commentators have been very various. Some take these words in a metaphorical sense, to denote those tears of contrition which were drawn, as it were, from the bottom of their hearts, and fell from their eyes before the Lord. Others think, that with this water they washed their bodies, (as they are supposed to have done upon another occasion, Exod. xix. 10.) to signify the purification of their souls from the pollution of sin. Others, that they made use of it to cleanse the ground where Samuel was to erect an altar, that it might not stand upon an impure place. Some suppose that it was employed as an emblem of humiliation, of prayer, of expiation, of execration, and I know not what besides. But the most probable opinion is, that this water was, upon this occasion, poured out, by way of libation, before God: and, for the support of this, it is commonly alleged, that libations of this kind were very customary in ancient times; that Theophrastus, as he is cited by Porphyry, tells us, that the earliest libations were of water, though afterwards honey and wine came into request; that Virgil mentions the practice of sprinkling the water of the lake Avernus; and that Homer remarks, that, for want of wine, the companions of Ulysses poured out water in a sacrifice which they offered to the gods. It is certain, that David poured out unto the Lord the water which the three gallant men in his army brought him from the well of Bethlehem, at the hazard of their lives, 2 Sam. xxiii. 19; therefore, though the law does not enjoin any such libations of water; yet, since there is no positive prohibition of them, why may we not suppose, that, upon this extraordinary occasion, something singular and extraordinary might have been done?

—Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

them up alive, before they knew where they were, while the claps of thunder, and flashes of fire were so violent, that their very eyes and limbs were scorched to such a degree, that they could neither see their way before them, nor handle their arms.\(^*\)—Jewish Antiq.

a king, he gave him instructions to lay before them what they were to expect from this wanton, fickle temper: that he should enslave them and their children,* by making them subject to all vile offices; that they should be always in arms and tumults, liable to the inconveniences of a constant war, and attended with heavy taxes; and that then they should cry to the Lord, but he would not hear them.

Though Samuel gave them this solemn warning they persisted in their resolution, positively saying, 'We will have a king over us, that we may be like other nations,+ and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our bat-

Samuel, seeing them so resolute, again consulted the Lord about it, who bid him answer their desire, and make them a king. Upon this Samuel dismissed the elders of Israel to their cities; and since the setting up of a king at that time was but to gratify the humour of a fickle people, God fitted them with a man extraordinary in his person, being taller by the head and shoulders than any of the people. This was Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, a handsome youth.

Kish's asses being gone astray, he sent his son Saul with a servant to seek them; t

quences of rejecting him and Samuel for who after much wandering about, came to the town of Ramah-zophim, Samuel's residence, without hearing any news of what they sought for. Here Saul's servant said to him, 'There is a seer in this town, who may tell us where the asses are.' Saul approved of what his servant proposed, and went into the town inquiring for the seer. God had the day before given Samuel notice of Saul's coming, and declared to him he was the person whom he had chosen to be king.

Saul meeting there with Samuel, who was going up to a high place, & to offer sacrifice, asked him where was the house of the seer? Samuel, understanding again that he was the person God had appointed to be king, answered, 'I am the seer: go up with me to this high place; you shall dine with me to-day, and I will dismiss you to-morrow. As for the asses that were lost three days ago, be not in pain for them, they are found again." Then he assured him that all the best things in Israel should be his; and bringing him home with him, he invited thirty persons to bear him company, seating Saul above all the other guests, and also distinguishing him by setting before him the best of the meat.

Having entertained Saul, Samuel took him to a convenient place of retirement, and had further communication with him there that evening; and early in the morning calling him up, that he might dismiss him, they went out together; and as they were going down towards the end of the city, Samuel bid Saul order his servant to go before, || but stand still him

^{*} This prediction was verified under the administration of Saul, who, though on his first promotion to the government of Israel he gave omens of a mild and gentle reign, in the latter part, when under the influence of jealousy, and a total distraction of mind, grievously oppressed his subjects, and glutted his full resentment with the innocent blood of thousands.

⁺ It seems plain, their motives for asking a king were vanity and ambition; they thought themselves inferior to other nations, because they were destitute of the pageantry of state. Their sensual desires could not be satisfied, unless they saw a prince set over them, shining in gold and jewels, living in a sumptuous palace, attended with guards richly habited, and appearing in great state; in which they supposed the chief glory of a land to

[†] He was probably employed in looking after his father's cattle; an employment which was exercised by the greatest personages, in the early ages: and in Judea asses were a considerable part

of their substance.

In several places of scripture, the Canaanites are said to have had their high-places, whereon they worshipped their idols, but this is the first instance of any belonging to the people of God; and it is the opinion of some learned men, that this appointment of a private or inferior place of worship (even while the ark and tabernacle were in being) by so great an authority as that of Samuel, gave rise to the institution of synagogues, and proseuchas in so many places of the kingdom afterwards .- Patrick's Commentary.

This was with design to let Saul understand, that what Samuel was about to do was by divine

self for a while, that he might show him what God had said concerning him.

The servant being gone out of sight, Samuel, taking a vial of oil,* poured it upon the head of Saul, and kissed him;† adding, that he did this because the Lord had appointed him a prince over his inheritance.

Then as a token that what he had told him was true, he foretold several particulars which should happen to him in his return. That near Rachel's tomb, he

appointment; and that when they should come to cast lots among all the tribes, as they after did, Saul might not think he was chosen king by the chance of a lot. Besides, there may be another reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, viz. lest the people, suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will more than the appointment of God, should mutiny. Therefore it was necessary that this should not be published till Saul was convinced that he was chosen by God himself.

* We read of no express command for the anointing of kings, and yet it is plain, from the parable of Jotham, Judg. ix. 8. that this was a custom two hundred years before this time. Why oil, rather than any other liquid, was the symbol of conveying a regal authority, we are no where informed. It is true, that God directed Moses to consecrate Aaron to the high-priest's office by anointing his head with oil, Exod. xxix. 7. but the anointing of kings, we may presume, was of a prior date. Unction, indeed, in the days of Jacob, was the common method of setting apart from common use even things inanimate, Gen. xxviii. 18. and therefore it may well be supposed, that persons of such designation as kings were, were all along admitted by the same ceremony, which might be of divine appointment, perhaps at the first institution of government, in the antediluvian world, and thence handed down, by a long tradition, to future generations. This rite of unction, in short, was so much the divine care, that we find God giving Moses a prescription how to make the consecrating oil, Exod. xxx. 23. But though Solomon was anointed with oil taken from the tabernacle, yet since Samuel was no priest, and could not therefore have access to the tabernacle, which at this time was at some distance from him, it is more reasonable to think-though some Jewish doctors will have it otherwise-that what he made use of, upon this occasion, was no more than common oil .- Patrick's Commentary.

† This signified a communication of grace, and a mutual concord between the regal and sacerdotal offices, a kiss being an emblem of friendship and peace. Mariana will have it to be a token of subjection and homage; but in this case (however it may be in others) it could not be so in Samuel towards Saul; for Samuel was prince and prophet; and this act rather seems to make Saul his equal than his superior.

would meet two men, who should inform him that his father's asses were found again: that, departing thence, he should meet three men going to Bethel, one of them carrying three kids, the second three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine, and that they should give him two parts thereof. And lastly, that when he came to the mountain of God, where was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets, going into the city, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he should prophecy amongst them.‡

After this he ordered Saul to go to Gilgal, where in seven days he might expect to see him, because there Samuel intended to offer a peace-offering. All which signs that Samuel had foretold, Saul found to happen exactly.

And now, though Samuel had thus privately anointed Saul, which no one knew but themselves, yet for the general satisfaction of the people, and that the choice and inauguration of the king might be more public and solemn, Samuel called them before the Lord at Mizpeh, to which place the ark of the Lord was brought, that the choice might be openly made, and declared by casting lots among all the tribes of Israel, to know from which of them the king was to be chosen.

The lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin; and casting the lot again among the families of Benjamin, the lot fell upon the family of Matri, and at last on Saul, the son of Kish. Saul being before assured that the choice would fall on him, was not present at the casting of the lot; but the people inquiring of the Lord, whether they should fetch him or not, he

[†] The accomplishment of this prediction could not fail of convincing Saul, that what the prophet had done was by the immediate appointment of God; and that the same divine power, who had exalted him to the supreme power of Israel, would certainly endow him with all those qualifications necessary to the due execution and discharge of so important a trust; and so it really was, for we are told, 'God gave him another heart,' 1 Sam. x. 9

them where to find him.

Accordingly they went for him; and having brought him, they set him among the people from the shoulders upwards; at it.'t which Samuel observing, said to them, Behold him whom the Lord hath chosen; there is none like him among all the people!' At which words the people gave a general shout, saying, 'God save the king.'

Then Samuel told them the duty of a king, and the manner of governing the kingdom, writing it in a book, and laid it before the Lord; which done, he dismissed the people, and Saul went home to Gibeah, attended with a particular company of men, whom God had inclined to wait on him. But there were some *

not only consented, but expressly directed that were not pleased with the choice, though they had desired a king, but despised Saul, and would not make any presents to him; + which Saul observed, them, where he appeared taller than all but very prudently at that time connived

> him; desiring what they had not, and despising what they had. They do not express their contempt of him by name, but do it worse, in a more general way, by saying, 'Shall he save us?'

> † Presenting the King with gifts was one way of recognising him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, * They came not to salute him,' which is the same thing; for the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, and carried with it a sign of peace and friendship, of congratulation and joy, and of subjection and obedience. It was a general custom, and still continues among the eastern potentates, to bring presents, and not approach the throne without them.

> † The Hebrews say he was deaf, that is, seemed or pretended not to hear. In which he was very politic, being unwilling to begin his reign with any tumult, which his just resentment of such an affront might have occasioned: if he had taken any notice of the affront and not revenged it, he had shown himself mean-spirited; and if he had resented it, the people might have been apt to charge him with severity and cruelty.

^{*} These are called sons of Belial, that is, men of a rebellious, proud, disobedient spirit, who, though they had desired a king, yet now refuse

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK IV.

FROM SAUL'S CONQUEST OF THE AMMONITES TO THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

No government can be imagined more happy, more safe, more free, more honourable, than that wherein the fountain of all wisdom and power, of all justice and goodness, presides; and therefore the least that we can say of the Israelites, in desiring to change this form for such a one as was in use in the nations round about them, namely, for an absolute and despotic government, where the princes were tyrants, and the subjects all slaves, argues at least a great pitch of folly and indiscretion, a baseness of mind, an ingratitude of temper, a spirit of rebellion, and a secret attachment to the idolatrous practices of those people whose kings they were so eager to imitate. For, 'Make us a king to judge us,' was equivalent in their mouths to what their forefathers demanded of Aaron, 'Make us gods, that they may go before us;' because in this manner, he, who best knew the secrets of their hearts, in his answer to Samuel, has expounded their meaning: 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them; according to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, they have forsaken me and served other gods.' The

manner in which they demanded a king was no less culpable than the ends they proposed by it; for, instead of consulting God upon an affair of this consequence, they went hastily to Samuel, and when, by fair remonstrances, he is attempting to dissuade them from so dangerous an enterprise, they turn impetuously upon him, and say, 'Nay, but we will have a king;' and this may be the reason, perhaps, why 'God gave them one in his anger,' descended of the meanest tribe in Israel, and of the meanest family in that tribe, to show them that he himself was not satisfied with their proceedings, nor could be pleased with any thing that was extorted from him by undutiful importunities.*

The regal government, however, though originating in the perverse impiety and folly of the Israelites, was so regulated and guarded by the divine law as to promise the greatest public benefits. The kings of Israel were merely the viceroys of Jehovah, who was the sole legislator; and therefore, as they could on no occasion either enact a new law or alter or repeal an old one, the government continued to be a theocracy, as well under their permanent administration as it was under

the occasional administration of the judges. The only difference that can be discovered between the two species of government is, that the conduct of the judges was generally directed by Urim; and that of the kings either by the inspiration of God vouchsafed to themselves, or by prophets raised up from time to time to reclaim them when deviating from their duty as laid down by the law.

CHAPTER I.

Saul's first exploit.—Samuel's address to the people.—Saul conquers the Philistines.—Is reproved by Samuel for sacrificing in his absence.—Effects of his imprudent conduct in divers instances.—God makes known his design towards David to Samuel.—David is enabled by the divine strength to perform miraculous feats of valour.—He excites the jealousy of Saul, who seeks his life.—Is preserved by Jonathan.

THE first remarkable action of Saul, after his promotion to the government of Israel, was, his conquest over Nahash, king of the Ammonites, who had besieged Jabesh-Gilead,* and so distressed the inhabitants, that in consequence of the cruel terms which he had proposed for showing them quarter, which were, that every man should have his right eye put out, they applied to the king of Israel to relieve them from so tyrannical an oppressor.

The people of Jabesh had no more than seven days; to call in the aid of the Isra-

elites, who, in obedience to the king's proclamation, mustered an army of three hundred thousand, which, together with the thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah, formed a very powerful body.

Saul, having disposed his forces in three parties, surprised the unprepared Ammonites, at the earliest dawn, and charged them with such fury, that victory soon declared itself in his favour.

This important conquest over so formidable and cruel an enemy greatly enhanced the reputation of Saul, and induced some of his favourites to request, that he would exert the power he had now obtained in the punishment of those who had treated him with indignity at his election; but the king nobly waved such mean revenge, nor would sully the glory of a memorable exploit, by the death of any one Israelite, for whom among the rest, the Lord had that day wrought so great salvation.

Saul's signal success afforded Samuel a very good opportunity of reconciling a late difference among the people, by proposing to them a general agreement concerning the validity of his title to the government, as well as confirmation of his election, by an avowed recognisance of his power. To effect this important design, he summoned a general assembly at Gilgal, and in a very pathetic address, first appealed to them all, as to the integrity of his conduct, during the time of his administration; then charged them with their own ingratitude, and that of their ancestors; and lastly, assured them of the divine resentment that would inevitably follow the transgression of the divine command, which could be in no instance more flagrant than in rejecting the government of God, and him under God, and desiring a king, when the Lord

^{*} This town lay on the east side of Jordan, and not far from the Ammonites who besieged it. Eusebius and St Jerome tell us that it existed in their time, and was situated on a hill about six miles distant from Pella. It is sometimes in scripture simply called Jabesh.

[†] As the manner of fighting in those days was chiefly with bow and arrow, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye rendered them incapable of either. He did not think proper to put out both their eyes, because they would then have been utterly incapable of rendering him any service, or paying him tribute.

[†] He had so mean an opinion of the people, that he made no difficulty of complying with their request. Saul, indeed, had been appointed king; but so small a space of time before, that Nahash was persuaded be could not levy an army in so short

a space as seven days, and, consequently, that there was no danger in granting them the respite they desired.

[§] The divine historian, having informed us how God consented to give his people a king; to show

Omnipotent had undertaken to direct with God to avert the judgments they so

To strike them more deeply with a sense of their atrocious crime, Samuel called down the present vengeance of their offended God in a storm of thunder and rain, at the time of wheat-harvest.* This extraordinary event terrified them in general, and deeply sensible of their transgression, they entreated Samuel to implore the divine mercy, and intercede

us that he had not cast off the government, but only transferred the immediate administration to a deputy, and consequently that their king was his viceroy, tells us here how God was pleased to bring them to repentance in an extraordinary way; the gracious method he commonly employed, when he intended to pardon.

* The wheat-harvest began in Judea about the end of June, or beginning of July; in which season

thunder and rain were seldom known, but only in the spring and autumn, one called the former, and the other the latter rain. Though the summer in Syria is commonly dry, the heavens are sometimes overcast, and a smart thunder shower suddenly rushes down to refresh the parched soil. One of these fell at Aleppo in the night between the first and second of July 1743; but it was regarded as a very uncommon occurrence at that season. It is probably still more extraordinary at Jerusalem; for Jerome, who lived long in Palestine, denies, in his commentary on Amos, that he had ever seen rain in those provinces, and especially in Judea, in the end of June, or in the month of July. It may, however, occasionally fall, though Jerome had never seen it, as it did at Aleppo, while Dr Russel resided in that city. But such an occurrence, by no means invalidates the proof which the prophet Samuel gave of his divine mission, when he called for thunder and rain from heaven in the time of wheat-harvest; since a very rare and unusual event immediately happening without any preced-ing appearance of it, upon the prediction of a person professing himself to be a prophet of the Lord, and giving it as an attestation of his sustaining that character, is a sufficient proof that his affirmation is true, although a similar event has sometimes happened without any such declared interposition of God, and therefore universally understood to be casual and without design. Nor

should it be forgotten, that this thunder storm in the book of Samuel, seems to have happened in

the day time, while the people of Israel were

celebrating the accession of Saul to the throne; a

circumstance which, from its singularity, added considerable energy to this event, and, perhaps, was to them a sufficient proof of the miraculous interference of Jehovah. Dr Russel informs us, that the rains in those countries usually fall in the

night, as did those extraordinary thunder storms

already mentioned, which happened in the month

of July .- Paston.

justly deserved.

Rejoiced at the effect of this miraculous display of Almighty power, he not only promised compliance with their request, but assured them that he was sincerely disposed to instruct them in their duty, the neglect of which would involve both them and their king in inevitable destruction.

Saul, having obtained a complete victory over the Ammonites, dismissed his forces, reserving only three thousand, two of which he retained at Michmash as his own body guard, and appointed the other for the protection of his son Jonathan at Gibeah.

Jonathan, being a valiant young prince, attacked and cut off a garrison of the Philistines in a neighbouring city; and this being deemed an act of hostility, proved the cause of an open rupture between that people and the Israelites.

In order therefore to avenge themselves of the injury they had sustained from the king's son, the Philistines raised a vast army, which, besides an almost innumerable body of foot, consisted of three thousand chariots,+ and six thousand horse,

[†] The words in the original, and in our translation, are 'thirty thousand;' but the Syriac and Arabic versions (which we have thought proper to follow) make them no more than three thousand : and indeed whoever considers, that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, when he had mustered all his forces together, could bring no more than six hundred of these chariots into the field, and all the other princes, whose equipages are related in scripture, much fewer, must needs think it a thing incredible that the Philistines, out of their small territories, which extended no farther than the two tribes of Simeon and Dan, along the coasts of the Mediterranean sea, could ever be able to raise so vast an armament; no, nor all the nations that they could possibly call in to their assistance. For, besides that, in the account of all armies, the cavalry is always more numerous than the chariots of war, (which is different here) the largest armies that we ever read of, were able to compass a very few of these chariots, in comparison of the number here specified. Mithridates, in his vast army, had but a hundred; Darius but two; and Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Mac. xiii. 2.) but three. So that we must either say, that the transcribers made a mistake in the Hebrew copy, or (with some other commentators) suppose, that this thirty thousand chariots were not chariots of war, but most of

with which they proceeded and encamped at Michmash.*

Saul therefore by sound of trumpet mustered his forces, and with them encamped at Gilgal, impatiently waiting the arrival of Samuel; but as the prophet tarried longer than was expected, the people were so disheartened by his delay, that they hid themselves in rocks and caves; and not thinking themselves secure even in those retirements, passed the river Jordan.

Saul, fearing an attack from the enemy before he had sent up his prayer to God, from whom alone he could expect success, ordered sacrifices immediately to be made, and the burnt-offering was just finished the moment Samuel arrived.

As the prophet had previously assured him that he would be with him at Gilgal within the space of seven days, and the conduct of the king argued both distrust and ingratitude; the prophet severely censured his behaviour as a heinous breach of God's command, by which he would incur the loss of his kingdom, which should be transferred to a more pious person.

Having thus reprimanded the disobedience of Saul, Samuel left Gilgal, and repaired to Gibeah, where he was followed by the king and his son, with a small army of about six thousand men, and those so badly furnished with military accountrements, that they were reduced to the necessity of using their implements of agriculture, because the Philistines had cautiously prevented a single smith from residing among them.+

During the encampment of the Philistines at Michmash, detachments were sent out from amongst them to plunder the country; and they continued their depredations some time unopposed; till Jonathan, happily inspired with a religious confidence and genuine patriotism, privately withdrew from the camp, attended by his armour-bearer only, to whom he had imparted his design, and found means to ascend a steep and craggy rock, which

them carriages only, for the conveyance of the baggage belonging to such a vast multitude of men, or for the deportation of the plunder they hoped to be masters of by having conquered the country.—Le Clerc's Commentary, and Universal History.

† The precaution which the Philistines took to hinder the Israelites from providing themselves with weapons, is no more than what other conquerors have done to the nations they have vanquished. Porsenna, when he made peace with the Romans, restrained them from the use of all iron, but what was necessary in the tillage of their ground. Cyrus, when he subdued the Lydians, for fear of a revolt, took from them the use of arms, and instead of a laborious life spent in war, suffered them to sink into softness and luxury, so that they soon lost their ancient valour: and (to instance in one prince more) Nebuchadnezzar, when he had made himself master of Judea, took along with him into Babylon 'all the craftsmen and smiths,' that the poorest of the people, which he left behind, might be in no condition to rebel, 2 Kings xxiv. 14. The only wonder is, why the Israelites, after they had regained their liberty under the government of Samuel, and given the Philistines so total an overthrow at Ebenezer, did not restore these artificers, and so provide themselves with proper arms against the next occasion. But, besides the extreme sloth and negligence. which appears in the Israelites' whole conduct during this period, it was not so easy a matter, in so short a time, to recover a trade that was lost; especially among a people that had no iron mines, and were so wholly addicted to the feeding of cattle that they made no account of any mechani-In the famous victory which they gained over Sisera, we are told, that 'there was not a shield or spear seen among fifty thousand men of Israel,' Judg. v. 8.; but, notwithstanding this, they had bows, and arrows, and slings, which the menof Gibeah could manage to a wonderful advantage, Judg. xx. 16. And besides these, the Israelites. upon this occasion, might convert their instruments. of husbandry, their hatchets, their spades, their forks, their mattocks, &c., into instruments of war; a much better shift than what we read of some, who, in ancient times, had no other arms than clubs, and sharpened stakes hardened in the fire. -Stackhouse.

^{*} Eusebius and St Jerome inform us, that in their time there was a large town of this name lying about nine miles from Jerusalem, near Ramah; and the text tells us that it was eastward from Bethaven. Now Bethaven, which signifies the house of iniquity, is supposed to be the same with Bethel, and was so called, after that Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had set up his golden calves to be worshipped here: but, as Bethel lay to the east of Michmash, and not Michmash to the east of Bethel, as the text seems to say, the translation should be, that they encamped at Michmash, having Bethaven on the east, that is, they seized on that post, which Saul had before in Michmash, on mount Bethel.—Calmet's Commentary.

as soon as they had surmounted, they fell | this misguided prohibition, the pious and most furiously on the Philistines, who had not the least apprehension of an invasion, and through their great surprise, slew twenty of their inveterate foes.* This intrepid attack from only two men put the Philistines in such consternation, that, not distinguishing friends from enemies, they fell upon each other's swords, and thus became the instruments of their own destruction.

As soon as Saul received intelligence of this confusion in the enemy's camp, he immediately availed himself of the favourable opportunity, and fell upon the disordered Philistines with such fury, that he put them to a total defeat. But he was unhappily guilty of another flagrant breach of piety and prudence after this auspicious event; for, determined on a vigorous pursuit of the enemy, he prohibited his people, on the severe penalty of death, from taking any refreshment before night, lest they might be prevented from massacring their vanquished foes. This rash determination deprived him of every advantage that would otherwise have resulted from the victory; 'for his people, enfeebled by want of sustenance, were obliged to desist from the pursuit, and thereby afforded the enemy an opportunity of escaping to their own country.

To aggravate the ills consequent on

valiant Jonathan had well nigh fallen a victim to his father's rash vow; for being absent from the camp at the time of the proclamation, and therefore ignorant of it, he eat a little honey+ when almost famished, and would have undergone the cruel sentence, had not the people pleaded in his behalf the important share he had in acquiring the honours of the day.

Saul elated with his success wantonly resolved to pursue the enemy by night; but Samuel advised him to seek direction of God before the execution of his proposal; so that this scheme was entirely

given up.

Notwithstanding many improprieties in point of government, he still maintained his regal authority, and the Lord had appointed him to an expedition, which, if executed according to his directions, would in some measure have atoned for past miscarriages. The Lord had many years before determined to execute his judgment on the Amalekites for opposing the Israelites in their passage out of the land of Egypt.

Samuel was therefore sent by God, with a commission to Saul in the most peremptory terms, to extirpate the whole

^{*} How Jonathan and his armour-bearer only could put the whole army of the Philistines into so universal a consternation, appears, at first sight, very extraordinary; but when we consider that they climbed up a way never before attempted,that they surprised the enemy unawares, and perhaps when the greatest part of them were asleep, —that this army, being composed of different na-tions, might entertain jealousies and suspicions of each other,—and that the darkness of the night might make them apprehend the whole body of the Israelites was come upon them alone, the fright of the Philistines is not so very surprising: and when we add to all this, what is not indeed improbable, that God might at this instant infuse a panic fear into the whole host, our wonder will be turned into praise and adoration of that powerful Being, who, when he sees fit, can make the greatest heroes tremble, and put to flight the most formidable armies.

⁺ This was wild honey, which is now to be found in great abundance in the deserts of the Holy Land. Apparently, it could not be palm-honey which Jonathan found; for it was a honey-comb, and so far out of his reach that it required the putting forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, to be able to dip it into the refreshing delicacy. There is, however, a vegetable honey that is very plentiful in the East. Burckhardt, speaking of the productions of the Ghor, or valley of the Jordan, says, " One of the most interesting productions of this place is the Beyrouk honey, or as the Arabs call it, Assal Beyrouk." It was described to him as a juice dropping from the leaves and twigs of a tree called gharrab, of the size of an olive tree, with leaves like those of the poplar, but somewhat broader. The honey collects upon the leaves like dew, and is gathered from them, or from the ground under the tree, which is often ound completely covered with it. It is very sweet when fresh, but turns sour after being kept for two days. The Arabs eat it with butter; they also put it into their gruel, and use it in rubbing their waterskins, for the purpose of excluding the air. - Cal-

race of the Amalekites, men, women, and children, and with them every living creature, that could minister to use or sustenance: but instead of punctually complying with the divine command, Saul, with his usual impiety, partially saved Agag, king of that people, together with the best of his cattle, and many valuable commodities; and when Samuel remonstrated with him on the iniquity of his conduct, to exculpate himself, pretended that he had spared them from the pious motive of offering them as sacrifices to the Lord.

But the prophet, assured that this reserve proceeded from a principle of avarice rather than piety, would not admit of so vain a pretence; first set before his view the heinous nature of his transgression, and then declared to him God's awful determination of transferring the kingdom from his family to a more worthy race, which should punctually obey every command of the King of kings.

Impressed by this declaration, the guilty king confessed his crime, earnestly begged the pious prophet to deprecate in his behalf the divine vengeance, and make intercession for him; and also to enhance

race of the Amalekites, men, women, and his reputation among the people (who children, and with them every living creature, that could minister to use or sustenin the solemn worship of God.

Samuel would not join in worship with one who had rejected the word of the Lord, and therefore prepared to depart, when Saul caught hold of the skirt of his mantle, and rent it; whereupon Samuel prophesied, that the Lord in like manner had rent the kingdom from him.

At length, however, Samuel was induced, by his hearty contrition, to comply with his request: but before he departed, he insisted that Agag (who began to entertain hopes of being spared) should be brought to him; which being done, he fell upon him; and with his own hand hewed him in pieces before the Lord.

After this transaction Samuel departed to his own habitation at Ramah; Saul repaired to his residence at Gibeah, and this proved the last interview between the king and the prophet.

is meant the punishment due to his sin; and his request to Samuel is, to pray to the Deity for him that he might escape that punishment.

to destroy them by the sword?

† The Vulgate renders, 'Bear my sin;' the Septuagint and Arabic, 'Take away my sin.' By sin

Paxton.

[‡] This punishment seems to have been extremely common in Abyssinia when Mr Bruce was there, and was probably handed down from the founders of that kingdom: "Coming across the market place," says the traveller, "I had seen Za Mariam, the Ras's door-keeper, with three men bound, one of whom he fell a hacking to pieces in my presence; and upon seeing me running across the place, stopping my nose, he called me to stay till he should despatch the other two, for he want-ed to speak with me, as if he had been engaged about ordinary business; that the soldiers, in consideration of his haste, immediately fell upon the other two, whose cries were still remaining in my ears; that the hyænas at night would scarcely let me pass in the streets, when I returned from the palace; and the dogs fled into my house, to eat pieces of human carcases at their leisure." This account elucidates the mode of execution adopted by the prophet Samuel, in relation to Agag, the king of Amalek: 'And Samuel said, as, (or, in the same identical mode) thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.' This was not a sudden and passionate act of vengeance, but a deliberate act of retributive justice. That savage chieftain had hewed many prisoners to death; and therefore, by the command of Jehovah, the judge of all the earth, he is visited with the same punishment which he had cruelly used towards others.

^{*} The extirpation of the Amalekites had been determined by God above four hundred years before this transaction. Balaam in his vision confirms this doom. The order to cut them entirely off was renewed by God several years afterwards, and agreeable to this order, Saul set out on this expedition. It may be observed also, that they continued inveterate enemies to the Hebrews, and joined with their adversaries, whenever they could, to enslave and destroy them; particularly with the Midianites, Judg. vi. 2, 3, 33. Nay, this very order to Saul, utterly to destroy them, seems to have been given because they had, together with Moab, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines, invaded and spoiled them; chap. xiv. 48. The Israelites, therefore, had a right to revenge themselves on them, as they were aggressors by the law of nature and nations, and utterly to extirpate them too, if that was necessary for their own preservation; and were obliged to do it, if God commanded them. God did command it. And will any man dispute the right of God to destroy an incorrigible nation, by pestilence, earthquake, storm, or famine? As no sensible person can deny this, how then can he deny the right of God to destroy them by the sword?

Such was the regard of pious Samuer for the unhappy Saul, that though he visited him no more, he did not fail to lament the deplorable state into which he had fallen.*

But during his melancholy reflection, the Lord was pleased to reprove him for mourning over one whom he had rejected for his disobedience, and ordered him to repair to Bethlehem, under pretence of sacrificing there, to invite Jesse and his sons to the feast of the sacrifice, and do as he should there direct him.

Samuel instantly obeyed the divine command, and being demanded, on his approach to Bethlehem, whether he came with good intent, he answered, that he came in order to hold a feast of sacrifice unto the Lord.

Having made the necessary preparations, he particularly invited Jesse and his sons; after which, repairing to his house, and observing Eliab the eldest to be a goodly person, he supposed him, at first sight, to be the person appointed by God to succeed Saul in the government of Israel.

But being instructed otherwise by God, and finding that Jesse had another son, who was watching the sheep in the field, he desired he might be immediately sent for, being determined not to institute the feast before his arrival.

When the youth came, Samuel perceived by his comely, yet innocent look, that he was the very person appointed by God to that high office, and therefore, according to the divine instruction, he singled him out from the rest of his brethren, poured oil on his head, and anointed him.+

From that very instant, David was endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, with prudence, courage, and every ornament of body and mind, necessary to compose a great prince.

As David daily grew in the favour of the Lord, Saul declined more and more, the Spirit of God departed from him, and his mind was agitated by the most perplexing reflections on his dire circumstances, which frequently deprived him of his reason, and threw him into an absolute frenzy.

To alleviate his grief, some of his at-

Israel. David himself might be as ignorant of the precise intention of Samuel in this ceremony as his brethren, because it was customary to anoint a person for the prophetic office as well as the regal. Samuel's not revealing this secret to David, showed his prudence, because, if it had got wind before the proper crisis, it would have endangered both their lives.—Where the kingdom was here-ditary, as that of Judah was, every king was not anointed, but only the first of the family; who being anointed for himself and all his successors of the same family, they required no other unction. If, however, any difficulty arose concerning the succession, then the person who obtained the throne, though of the same family, was anointed in order to terminate the dispute; after which the title was not to be questioned. This was the case with Solomon, Joash, Jehoahaz, and others. kingdom was not made hereditary in the family of Saul; and, therefore, Ishbosheth's seizing on the crown was only an usurpation. The power of nominating a successor to Saul was reserved by God to himself, by whom David (who was no relation to Saul by blood, 1 Sam. xvi. 12.) was appointed king. David, therefore, had no other title but by divine appointment, first signified by the prophet Samuel's anointing him, and after-wards by the voluntary ratification of this appointment on the part of the people: so that the anointing of David was necessary for the confirmation of his title. But the kingdom being made hereditary in David's family, his being anointed served for him and all his successors, except when the right to the throne was disputed. Thus, when Solomon's right to the throne was contested by his elder brother Adonijah, it was necessary that he should be crowned, in order to quash that claim. In like manner, Joash, the seventh king of Judah, was anointed because Athaliah had usurped and possessed the throne for six years, 2 Kings xi. 12. So, Jehoahaz, the younger son of Josiah, was anointed king (2 Kings xxiii. 30.) and reigned three months: after which, he was succeeded by his elder brother Jehoiakim, who ought first to have accended the throne of Judah. Thus it appears, that in all cases of disputed succession, anointing was deemed to give a preference.

^{*} He had a sincere value for his country, and therefore could not help lamenting the sad condition of its king.

[†] He singled him out from the rest, and privately anointed him; for it is plain, from what is said before, that Samuel was afraid to have it known, and therefore did not anoint him publicly in the midst of his brethren. And by Eliab's treatment of David after this, 1 Sam. xvii. 28, it is evident that he did not know him to be anointed king over

tendants advised him to have recourse to music, to which, when he consented, one of them recommended David to him, assuring him, he was not only an excellent musician, but possessed of every qualification of body and mind that could engage his favour; and above all, that the Lord was with him.

In consequence of the advice of his attendants, the youth was brought into the presence of Saul, and Jesse, knowing the custom of the court, had provided him with a handsome present, with which on delivery the king was much pleased; but charmed with his skill on the harp, which for the present diverted his melancholy thoughts.*

* Some commentators have been so far carried away with the manner of the scripture expression, namely, that an evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul, as to think, that he was really possessed with a devil, which at certain times came strongly upon him, and threw him into all the mad fits whereof we read: but it should be considered, that the word spirit, in the sacred language, is of a very extensive signification, and denotes frequently, not only the dispositions of the mind, but those of the body likewise; that the custom of the Jews was to imagine, that every affliction, whose cause they were ignorant of, proceeded immediately from God; and that it is a very common thing to find the scripture phrase accommodating itself to this vulgar prejudice. Now in our interpretation of scripture, this, I think, should be a rule,—that when a passage is capable of two senses, whereof the one supposes a miracle, and the other a natural event only, the latter should take place, especially when there are no circumstances to determine us to the contrary. But now, in the case before us, the frequent access of Saul's malady, the symptoms that attended it, and the remedy made use of to assuage it, do sufficiently denote, that it proceeded from a deep melancholy, or black bile inflamed; and that the man was hypochondriac, rather than possessed. Agreeable to this bad complexion of body was the natural temper of his mind, which, through his whole conduct, was suspicious, diffi-dent, cruel, passionate, and vindictive. Add to this, that the remorses of his conscience, the menaces of Samuel, God's rejection of him, and his continual apprehensions of being either dethroned or put to death by his competitor, confirmed still more and more the evil dispositions which his distemper engendered, and carried them by fits into downright madness: and as madness is occasioned by an atrabilous humour highly inflamed, and diffused through the blood, and from melancholic vapours, which ascend to the brain, and make an alteration in its temperature, it is no hard matter to conceive, that the agreeable sound of a musical instrument, which occasions joy and self-complaSaul at length conceived such esteem for David, that having obtained his father's consent to his continuing with him, in order to attach him to his service, he made him his armour-bearer.

The Philistines, who had lately sustained a total defeat from the army of Saul, having now collected their scattered forces, appeared again in a disposition that portended their design of avenging the late hostilities of the Israelites, being encamped between Shochoh and Azekah,+

cency, should dissipate these bad humours, and make the blood and spirits return to their equal and natural motion. What the power of music is, to sweeten the temper and allay and compose the passions of the mind, we have some examples from sacred history, but many more from the pro-As this same Saul was returning from Samuel, he met, at the place which is called the Hill of God, a company of prophets, playing on several instruments; and such was the effect of their melody, 'that the Spirit,' as the scripture expresses it, Came upon him, and he was turned into an-When Elisha was desired by Jehoshaphat, to tell him what his success against the king of Moab would be, the prophet required a minstrel to be brought unto him, and when the minstrel played, it is said 'that the hand of the Lord came upon him:' not that we are to suppose, that the gift of prophecy was the natural effect of music, but the meaning is, that music disposed the organs, the humours, the blood, and in short, the whole mind and spirit of the prophet, to receive the supernatural impression. The truth is, common experience, as well as the testimony of the gravest authors, proves, that there is in music a certain charm to revive the spirits, mellow the humours, allay the passions, and consequently, to dissipate that rage, or melancholy, which either fumes up into the brain in vapours, or overspreads the heart with grief and dejection. We need less wonder therefore, that we find the Pythagoreans, whenever they perceived, either in themselves or others, any violent passion beginning to arise, immediately betaking themselves either to their flute or their guitar; that we find Theophrastus declaring, that music is an excellent remedy against several distempers, both of the mind and body; others, that Asclepiades, a renowned physician among the ancients, was used to cure madness by the power of symphony; and others again, that the most violent poison, that of the sting of the Tarantula, has been expelled very frequently by this means .- Stackhouse.

† Shochoh and Azekah lay to the south of Jerusalem, and east of Bethlehem, about four leagues from the former, and five from the latter.—Three miles from Bethlehem, on the road to Jaffa, lies the celebrated valley of Elah, which is not above half a mile in breadth, and memorable for the victory gained by the youthful David over the uncircumcised champion of the Philistines. "It is,"

while Saul with his forces pitched their tents upon an eminence above the valley of Elah, which separated the two armies.

While the Israelites and the Philistines lay encamped opposite each other, a champion of stupendous bulk and stature, called Goliath, came out of the Philistines' camp, for forty days successively, and challenged any one of the whole army of the Israelites to single combat,* which should absolutely decide the fate of either army.

This Philistine Colossus was near ten feet high, and his limbs extremely muscular and nervous, insomuch that he struck every beholder with terror, as well as astonishment, and none durst accept his challenge, which he presumptuously offered for so long a succession of time.

At length, however, the provident de-

says Dr Clarke, "a pretty and interesting looking spot; the bottom covered with olive trees. Its present appearance answers exactly to the description given in scripture: for nothing has ever occurred to alter the appearance of the country. The two hills, on which the armies of the Israelites and Philistines stood, entirely confine it on the right and left. The very brook, whence David chose him five smooth stones, (which has been noticed by many a thirsty pilgrim, journeying from Jaffa to Jerusalem,) still flows through the vale, which is varied with banks and undulations. The ruins of goodly edifices attest the religious veneration entertained in later periods for the hallowed spot: but even these are now become so insignificant, that they are scarcely discernible; and nothing can be said to interrupt the native dignity of

this memorable scene."

Antiquity furnishes us with examples of several such like combats as Goliath here proposes, but with none more remarkable than that between the Horatii and Curiatii, related by Livy, lib. i. c. 23. "In which case," as Grotius expresses himself, "though the champions perhaps cannot, with all the innocence imaginable, engage in the combat, yet their respective states may, at least, allow of it, as a less evil; as an expedient, whereby a decision is made (without the effusion of much blood, or any considerable loss on either side) which of the two nations shall have the dominion over the other. Strabo, (says he) makes mention of this, as an ancient custom among the Greeks; and Æneas appeals to the Latins, whether it is not highly just and equitable, that he and Turnus should determine the controversy between them in this man-ner." But whether ever there was any combat, stipulated to be decisive of the quarrel between two contending nations, it is certain that this speech of Goliath's was a mere bravado, proceeding from a high opinion he had of his own matchless fender of Israel raised his own people a deliverer, in the person of young David, who happened at that time to come to the camp with provision for his elder brethren, who were then in the service.

David observing this gigantic Philistine insolently taunt the whole army of Israel, and hearing the prodigious reward the king had promised to any one who should slay him, namely, that he was to give him his own daughter in marriage, and ennoble his family, by conferring on them the freedom of Israel, was disposed as it were by a divine impulse, to encounter this daring, formidable hero.

His elder brother Eliab, thinking the very pretence an instance of the highest presumption, took occasion to reprimand him for his rashness. But David waved his brother's choler, by addressing himself to another man, and expressing a steady zeal and unshaken intrepidity for the cause of God, as well as utter contempt of the insolent boastings of the haughty Goliath.

The resolution of this favourite youth at length reached the ears of the king, who sent for him, and from a motive of real concern set before him the danger he must inevitably incur by encountering with a man of Goliath's prodigious skill, and long military experience.

But David, to obviate the king's suspicion, informed him that he had performed exploits full as daring as that of engaging with the present Philistine; that he had slain a lion and a bear with his own hand, and now relied on the same Almighty arm to enable him to vanquish the insolent foe, who had set at defiance the armies of God.

strength, as if he had been the whole support of the nation, which was to stand or fall together with him. For, that he had no authority from the princes of the Philistines to make any such declaration, is evident from the event; since, so far were the Philistines from yielding themselves slaves to the Hebrews upon the death of this champion, that they made the best of their way into their own country, and there defended themselves, and fought many battles with them afterwards.—Saurin, Patrick, and Le Clerc.

The king, greatly applauding the pious and brave resolution of David, ordered him to be arrayed in his own armour; but finding that upon trial unfit for him, it was put off; and he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones, which, together with his sling, composed his offensive weapons.

Thus prepared, he boldly advanced towards his powerful antagonist, who, thinking from his youth and diminutive stature he was opposed to him from mere contempt and derision, could not refrain from cursing him, and threatened at once to despatch him.

But David proceeded not in that selfsufficient manner; for, on the contrary, he assured the Philistine, that he undertook not to encounter him in his own strength, but that of the mighty God of Israel, whose name he had blasphemed, and whose armies he had impiously defied; and farther, as a proof of his confidence in the divine aid and direction, he told him, that he should deprive him of his head, and give his body for food to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field; and that he should be enabled to perform that exploit, in order to demonstrate to an infidel world the existence and power of an almighty Jehovah, even the God of Israel.

Nor did he rely on the strength of his God in vain; for, standing at a convenient distance from the Philistine, he discharged from his sling a stone, which struck Goliath on his forehead, pierced his brain,* and

CHAPTER IL.

Saul first promotes David, and afterwards, through jealousy, seeks his life.—The strictest friendship is formed between David and Jonathan, who concert divers measures to preserve him from the fury of his father.—The scheme he had laid to trepan him is defeated by the stratagem of Michal.—Saul endeavours to slay his son.—David seeks protection from the king of Achish.—Instanct of Saul's cruck resentment.—David's success against his enemies.—Death of the prophet Samuel.

SAUL, astonished at the mighty feat performed by this young hero, inquired of Abner, one of his generals, whose son he was? But Abner, not being able to resolve him, introduced David to the king, with the champion Goliath's head in his hand.

The king bestowed the highest praises on his valour, and desired to know whose son he was? He modestly replied, 'I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.'

The late glorious action excited the general esteem of the Israelites, and their

sary's eyes, or threw it with such a violent force as would penetrate both helmet and head together. To make these suppositions more probable, we need only remember what we read in Judges, ch. xx. 16. of no less than seven hundred men in one place, who were so expert with their left hands, that every one could sling stones to an hair's breadth, and not miss; or what we read in Diodorus Siculus, lib. 5. of some slingers, who threw stones with such a violence, that nothing could resist their impression; and that, when they made use of lead instead of stone, the very lead would melt the air, as it flew, by reason of the rapidity of the motion which they gave it.—Patrick and Culmet's Commentaries.

there remained, so that he fell upon his face; and David, who had no sword, ran up, caught hold of the giant, and immediately severed his head from his body, to the general joy of the Israelites and their allies, and the utter confusion of the Philistines, who fled before the former, by whom they were pursued unto the gates of Ekron with great slaughter.

^{*} If it should be asked, how this could possibly be, when Goliath was armed so completely, and, in particular, is said to have had an 'helmet of brass upon his head?' it is but supposing, that this arrogant champion, in disdain of his inferior combatant, might come negligently towards him, with his helmet turned back, and his forehead bare. It is highly probable, that when he made his menacing speech to David, he might turn back his helmet, both to speak, and be heard more distinctly; and there was no such terror in David's appearance, as might induce him to cover his forehead again. But, admitting he did, it is but supposing that David levelled his stone so right, as to hit the place which was left open for his adver-

allies; but none evinced such sanguine approbation as Jonathan, who, being a prince of innate valour, and intrepid fortitude, was so charmed with his prowess in the important execution, that he entertained the sincerest friendship for him, which being mutually cemented by the most endearing ties, ratified by covenant, and Jonathan's present of his robe, sword, belt, and bow,* to David, remained as long as they lived together.

David for a short time after this exploit, received a peculiar token of Saul's favour, and was appointed to the command of his men of war, which he filled with honour, prudence, and reputation.

But Saul's respect for David continued not long; for a circumstance soon fell out that excited in his suspicious mind the most burning jealousy.

As David was returning from the slaughter among the vast concourse assembled to behold the entry of their triumphant countrymen, was a company of women, who accompanied musical instruments with a song, the chief burden of which was, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'

This suggested to Saul's remembrance, what the prophet Samuel had told him, and excited his fears that David aspired after his throne; on which account he banished from his mind every sentiment of good will, and in its room conceived the most miserable revenge against the pious, brave, and innocent youth.

From this very instance, Saul resolved on his destruction, which he endeavoured the next day to effect with his own hand. His mind being greatly perplexed, David as usual came to divert his melancholy; and while he was playing the harp before him, not suspecting the least danger, the frantic king darted a javelin at him with all his might; but, as David was reserved by Providence for wise purposes, the king missed his aim, and David immediately withdrew.

After this remarkable event, David was removed from his immediate attendance on the king's person, and degraded to an inferior post in the army, which he filled as much to his own honour, and the approbation of his people, as he had done the first offices of state.

David's conduct in an inferior station, and the reputation which he thence acquired, inflamed the jealousy of Saul, and prompted him studiously to endeavour at his destruction.

By virtue of the king's solemn promise, previous to the encounter with the Philistine giant, David had an undoubted claim to one of his daughters in marriage; but meek in temper, he rested content with the honours already conferred upon him; nor had Saul conceived any intention of fulfilling that part of his promise, till he thought it might prove the most effectual method of sating his implacable revenge.

Accordingly, sending for David, he informed him of his design to bestow his daughter upon him, as a condition of his executing a commission that was attended with the utmost hazard of his life.

David modestly evaded the proposed honour, alleging the meanness of his family. Saul therefore embraced this opportunity of avoiding compliance with his promise, and gave his elder daughter Merab in marriage to Adriel, the son of Barzillai.

Michal, Saul's second daughter, had conceived a real affection for David, of

^{*} He did this, that his singular affection to David might be known to all, and that they might appear the more closely united into one. This was a customary method of testifying affection. We read in Tavernier of a Nazar, whose virtue and behaviour so pleased a king of Persia, after being put to the test, that he caused himself to be disapparelled, and gave his habit to the Nazar; which is the greatest honour that a king of Persia can bestow on a subject. The giving a girdle, in particular, was deemed a token of the greatest confidence and affection: in some cases it was considered an act of adoption. In regard to the sword and the bow, it has been customary in all countries to make such military presents as these to brave adventurers: of which instances occur in Greek and Roman writers.—Frag. to Calmet.

which the king being conscious, and in order to prosecute his former malicious scheme, he promised her in marriage to him, desiring no other compensation than that he should slay an hundred Philistines, and produce their foreskins in court before him.*

ing person, much more towards his avowed friend, took care to give him timely notice of the threatening storm, advising him to retire to some secure place till the morning, when he would take an opportunity of expostulating with his father, and transmit to him a particular account

David, imagining that the king was desirous of putting his valour to the test once more, without the least suspicion of the latent malice of the terms, readily acquiesced, and selecting some of the best men in the Israelitish army, marched at their head, attacked the Philistines, slew clouble the number + stipulated by the king, within the time he had prescribed, and, as an undeniable testimony of his having fulfilled the terms, presented their foreskins at court; so that having thus gallantly accomplished all things, the king could not refuse him his daughter, who rewarded his merit with the purest affection.

Various circumstances combining to inflame the jealousy and resentment of Saul, he cast off all disguise, engaged his whole family in executing his malicious design, and commanded Jonathan his son, and all his attendants by any means to despatch the detested David.

Jonathan, whose soul disdained such ingratitude and inhumanity to any deserv-

ed friend, took care to give him timely notice of the threatening storm, advising him to retire to some secure place till the morning, when he would take an opportunity of expostulating with his father, and transmit to him a particular account of his success. Jonathan, according to his proposal, set before his father both the unreasonableness and impiety of his design upon innocent David, who merited every good office at his hands; that Saul according to outward appearance was reconciled to David, and Jonathan, next day, introduced him into his presence, in the same respectable light as before.

But as the renown of David's exploits in divers conquests over the Philistines spread daily, and consequently added fuel to the resentment still latent in the breast of Saul, a short time proved this reconciliation to be mere pretence. Of this he gave evident demonstration; for, being seized with another fit of melancholy, David was sent for to play to him, and as before, while he was innocently endeavouring to amuse him, he again darted a javelin at him, which David avoided by nimbly changing his situation, and afterwards made his escape; but to the rancour of his design it is recorded that he smote the javelin in the wall.

Enraged at these repeated disappointments, he commanded a detachment of his guards to beset his house at day-break and slay him. But Michal, his wife, acquainted him with the design, and proposed to let him down from a window; which being done, by favour of the night, he once more escaped the malicious design of Saul; and to prevent the suspicion of the guards, Michal told them he was sick in bed, having artfully substituted in his room an image, with which the king was much incensed; but his daughter pleaded the most justifiable excuses for her conduct.

David hastened, as much as the night would permit him, to his-friend and coun-

the Josephus makes Saul's demand, and the number which David brought, to be six hundred. The Septuagint, instead of two hundred, read one bundred, in order to make it correspond with the

number which Saul demanded.

^{*} This condition was imposed by Saul with an insidious design; but the custom hath prevailed in many countries, to give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men, or to those who might bring so many heads of their enemies. Particularly, it was the custom among a people in Carmania, that, if any were desirous of marrying, it was necessary he should first bring to the king the head of an enemy. Saul seems to have mentioned the foreskins, and not the heads of the Philistines, by way of reproach upon them, as an uncircumcised and infidel people. Or rather, to prevent any cheat or collusion in the matter, and to enable him to be sure that they were Philistines only whom he killed; for the Philistines were the only neighbouring people who were uncircumcised.—Pyle and Calmet.

† Josephus makes Saul's demand, and the num-

sellor, Samuel at Ramah, to whom he communicated the particulars of what had passed between him and Saul, hoping that God by this means might direct him how to proceed in his intricate situation.

At the advice of the prophet, for his better security, he repaired together with him to Naioth, which was a school or college of the prophets,* where they both lived some time.

But the emissaries of the enraged king no sooner informed him of the place to which David had repaired for security, than, notwithstanding the sanctity of the place, he sent a party to apprehend him. But when they arrived at the sacred place, and heard Samuel instructing the other prophets, they were seized with a prophetic spirit, and returned not.

After these other messengers were despatched; but they no sooner approached

* When these schools of the prophets were at first instituted is no where indicated in scripture: but, as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose that they were much superior to it. It may be presumed, therefore, that the sad degeneracy of the priesthood at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets, or priests. According to the places that are specified in scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5, 10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14.) they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel. In these places the prophets had convenient colleges built (whereof Naioth seems to be one) for their abode; and living in communities, had some one of distinguished note (very probably by divine election) set over them to be their head or president. Here it was that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was that, by previous exercise, they quali-fied themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was that they were in-structed in the sacred art of psalmody, or (as the scripture calls it, I Chron. xxv. 1, 7.) in 'prophesying with harps, with psalteries, and cymbals:' and hence it was, that, when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordimary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen: so that these colleges were seminaries of divine knowledge, and nurseries of that race of prophets which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi.-Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacra, Wheatly on the Schools of the Prophets, and Jacob Abting, de Repub. Heb.

sellor, Samuel at Ramah, to whom he the venerable spot, than they were affect-communicated the particulars of what had ed in the same manner as the former.

Having proceeded in this manner three times successively, and received no satisfactory intimation, he at length went down himself: but when he drew near Naioth, he was influenced by the same divine power, and continued to prophecy† till he reached the place where Samuel and David had retired, when, stripping off his upper garment,‡ he humbly lay on the ground that day and the ensuing night.

David availed himself of this opportunity of leaving Saul at the school of the

† This is a word of an extensive signification, and may denote sometimes such actions, motions, and distortions, as prophets, in their inspirations are wont to express. But the generality of interpreters in this place, take prophesying to signify Saul's singing of psalms, or hymns of thanksgiving and praise, which even against his will he was compelled to do, to teach him the vanity of his designs against David, and that in them he fought against God himself.— Calmet's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.

The words in our translation are, 'And he stripped off his clothes also, and lay down naked all that day, and all that night,' 1 Sam. xix. 24. In which words, and some other portions of the like import, we are not to imagine that the persons there spoken of were entirely naked, but only that they were divested of some external habit or other, which, upon certain occasions, they might lay aside. For whereas it is said of some prophets, Isa. xx. 2. and Mic. i. 8., that they went about naked, we can hardly think that they could be guilty of so much indecency, and especially by the express order of God, who had always testified his abhorrence of nudity, and enjoined his priests the use of several garments to cover the body, that thus they might be distinguished from the Pagan priests who were not ashamed to appear naked. The words in the original, therefore, which we render naked, or to be naked, signify no more than either to have part of the body uncovered, or to be without a gown, or upper garment, which the Romans called Toga, and (according to the custom of the eastern people) was wont to be put on when they went abroad, or made any public appearance. And therefore it was some such vestment as this, or perhaps his military accoutrements, which Saul upon this occasion put off; and that this was enough to denominate him naked is manifest from what Aurelius Victor, speaking of those who were sent to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, to bring him to the senate to be made dictator, says, that they found him naked ploughing on the other side of the Tiber; whereas Livy, who relates the same story, observes, that he called to his wife Rucca for his gown, or toga, that he might appear fit to keep them company.- Essay towards a new Translation.

and consulting with him how to avert the resentment of his father, who thus indefatigably sought his life.

Jonathan not only assured him of his best services, but that he would take every possible measure to discover the intention of his father, and immediately acquaint him therewith: but to strengthen his confidence in him, he solemnly renewed the covenant of friendship that was between them; and having directed him to conceal himself in a certain place for a few days, till he could judge whether he should still lie hid, or might with safety again appear in public, which he was to signify by shooting an arrow; they cordially embraced, and then parted.

As the season approached for the celebration of the feast of the new moon,* Saul, according to custom, came from Naioth to attend that solemnity; and after he was seated, taking a view of the company, he observed that David's place was vacant for two days successively. This occasioned him to inquire the cause, wherefore the son of Jesse-a title of contempt-absented himself from the feast.

Jonathan answered his father in excuse for his friend, that he had obtained from

prophets, escaping to his friend Jonathan, him leave of absence, in order to be present at the anniversary feast, held by his own family at Bethlehem.

Saul, well knowing the inviolable friendship that subsisted between David and his son, and suspecting that what he urged in his excuse was mere pretence, most rancorously upbraided him with tak ing into his bosom, one who endeavoured to supplant him and his family in that which they held most dear, namely, the throne of Israel; insisting, at the same time, that he should bring him before his presence, as he was resolutely determined on his death.

So noble, so generous was the friendship of Jonathan, that, notwithstanding this flagrant instance of his father's inveterate hatred against the object of it, he still interposed in his behalf, inquiring of him what David had done to deserve death?

This behaviour in Jonathan so incensed his father, that, forgetting the ties of natural affection, in the vehemence of his frenzy he threw a javelin+ at his son, cruelly

^{*} The Israelites performed solemn sacrifices every new moon, and after the sacrifices feasted together: and David, being one of the king's family, by marrying his daughter, used to eat with him on these occasions; and he thought that Saul, by being inspired by the Spirit of God at Naioth, might possibly have forgot his anger, and make a favourable inquiry after him. The Jewish months were lunar, and never began before the moon appeared above the horizon; for which purpose there were certain persons placed upon the mountains some time before the moon was expected, to give notice by the sound of a horn when it first appeared, that so the news thereof might immediately be carried to Jerusalem. But lest there should be any mistake in this method of making their observation, from this example of Saul's it is supposed that they celebrated this festival for two days together. Whether the heathens had this rite from the Jews or not, it is certain that other nations had feasts at the beginning of every month, and that with the Romans, the calends in particular were festival days consecrated to Juno, to whom sacrifices at this time were offered .-Calmet's Commentary.

⁺ Saul had always a javelin or spear at hand to execute his evil purposes, because spears were the sceptres of those ages, which kings always carried in their hands. It has been suggested, that the words of the text do not mean, that Saul cast a javelin at Jonathan; but only that 'he had cast a javelin' at David, which Jonathan at this crisis recollected. It must, however, be admitted, that this is by no means an obvious construction of the original. Nor can it be readily thought, that merely a recollection of a fact which formerly had taken place, could induce Jonathan to leave his place 'in fierce anger;' when he had, at this time, borne the most provoking language of his father without expressing any indignant perturbation; and had also, subsequent to some of Saul's attempts on David's life, calmly expostulated with Saul, and induced him to engage, by a solemn oath, that he would not slay David. But the atrocity of such an attempt on the life of his own son, seems to some persons totally incredible. Yet Saul's stern and rigorous conduct, respecting Jonathan, after he had miraculously prevailed to rescue him and Israel from the greatest straits and disgrace, shows that the self-will and severity of his mind had overcome, even at that favourable crisis, his natural affection. And the transient attempt of his furious rage, in attempting to murder his son, on the occasion recorded in the text, bears no proportion to his subsequent deliberate, impious, and most barbarous murder of the priests, and

disappointments of his designs upon David.

But Jonathan avoided the stroke, and persuaded from his conduct, and even confession, of the continuance of his resolution upon the life of David, he went next morning with his bow into the field, gave the signal for his friend to appear, and having communicated to him what had passed between him and his father, as well as warned him, at all events, to escape for his life, they renewed their protestations of eternal friendship, embraced,* and departed.

David, thus warned by his friend Jonathan, betook himself to Nob,+ a city belonging to the priests, where stood the tabernacle at that time, in order to inquire of the Lord, by means of Abimelech the priest, what course he should take in

his present wandering.

Abimelech, who knew the dignity of his rank, but was ignorant that he was out of favour with the king, expressed his surprise at his arriving thus unattended: David concealed the true cause, and pretended to the high priest that he was despatched by the king on a secret expedition in such haste, that he had neither

desirous of avenging on him the frequent time to furnish himself with arms nor provision, desiring at the same time he would spare him some of whatever food was at hand. Abimelech informed David, that at present he had no common bread, but as the case was urgent he gave him some consecrated bread. Having thus appeased his hunger, David inquired if he had any arms in his possession; upon which he offered him Goliath's sword, ‡ the most acceptable weapon with which he could have presented him, as he himself acknowledged there was none like it.

David having thus found means to procure some necessaries from Abimelech, departed from Nob, having received intelligence that Doeg, the king's huntsman, was there; who would certainly disclose the interview to Saul. Diffident of his security in any part of Saul's dominions, he proceeded to Gath, but remained not long there before he was discovered and pointed at as the mighty warrior of Israel, who had so frequently signalized himself against the Philistines; so that to prevent information, he feigned insanity, and sustained the part of a lunatic, which he assumed with such skill and address, as evaded the suspicion of the king, and gave him an opportunity of flying to Adullam,§ where he was visited by all his relations, and applied to by about four hundred men, malecontents and desperadoes, to take the lead of them, who would resolutely follow his fortune, whithersoever he went. Pious David, after his family had thus joined him, fearing that the resentment of Saul would fall upon his aged parents, from a filial concern for their safety, put both himself and them under

their wives, and children; because they were supposed to favour David. Nor can any thing be deemed too atrocious for a man to commit, whom God had given up, and left, in a kind of desperate madness, under the power of Satan, and of his own passions, till he plunged himself invo destruction with his own hands .- Scott.

* This adien is the most pathetic and tender that ever was described. There was reason for David to exceed in sorrow, as he was now to become an exile from his friends, from his wife, from his parents, from his kindred, from the peo-ple of God, and from all sacred solemnities.

Adullam was a town in the tribe of Judah, of considerable note: and near it was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave naturally strong and fortified, and into this cave David retreated.

[†] There is mention made of two cities of this name, one on the east, or further side, and the other on the west, or hither side of Jordan. generality of interpreters will have the city here specified, to be that which stood on the west side, and in the tribe of Benjamin. Though it is not reckoned among the number of the cities that were at first assigned to the priests, yet it after-wards became one of the sacerdotal towns, and especially, as we may imagine, when the tabernacle came to be moved thither, is evident from 1 Sam. xxii, 19. and Nehem, xi. 32. and some suppose it stood about four leagues from Gibeah .- Calmet's Commentary and Wells's Geography.

t Though the sword of Goliath was deposited in the sacred place, it is much to be questioned whether it was placed here as a trophy, because trophies were generally hung up in some conspicuous place, which this was not; and if it was not dedicated to God as a sacred trophy, David's taking it away could not be said to be a profanation.

was then at enmity with Saul.

prophet Gad, who attended David, advised him to quit Moab, and return to the land of Judah, where he departed and took up his station in the forest of Hareth.

It appeared at this time that Saul was at Ramah, and having received intelligence of the people who had enlisted under the banner of David, he upbraided his attendants with want of loyalty, in that none of them would assert his cause against the son of Jesse, who, together with his son, had conspired against his person and government.

The people to whom he addressed himself, conscious of their innocence, made no reply; but Doeg, who had seen David with Abimelech, the high-priest, gave Saul information of every particular circumstance that had passed between them.*

Saul, willing to embrace any pretence in order to avenge himself on David, or any that were attached to his cause, summoned Abimelech, and all the priests who were in Nob, to appear before him. The priests, not suspecting the king's cruel design, obeyed the royal mandate, and as soon as they came into his presence, he addressed himself more particularly to Abimelech, demanding of him the cause wherefore he assisted the son of Jesse with provision, and advice, and thereby enabled him to prosecute his design of supplanting him in his regal authority?

Abimelech, conscious of his innocence, alleged the great merit of David,+ both as

the protection of the king of Achish, who related to the king and as a mighty warrior in Israel, which were indispensable mo-With this prince they dwelt until the tives with him for compliance with his request; and added, that he was wholly ignorant of the king's conceiving any displeasure against him at that time.

Though the plea of the high-priest was so just and equitable, Saul determined to sate his revenge on the innocent priest and his whole brotherhood, and therefore ordered some of his attendants to slay them, because they had not given him information of the place to which David had

The guards having heard Abimelech's defence, declined the execution of so barbarous a commission: Doeg therefore being present, undertook the bloody office, and with a sacrilegious hand, slew no less than fourscore and five of the priests of the Lord. Nor did this cruel scene sate the blood-thirsty Saul; for, sending a party to Nob, he commanded them to put every living soul, together with all the cattle of the field, to the destructive sword.1

faithful of your friends and officers, and, what is more, in the quality of your son too, and a relation in so tender a degree of affinity and alliance. For how should any body imagine that man to be your enemy, upon whom you have conferred so many honours? Or why should not I rather presume such a person, without any further inquiry, to be your singular friend?—He told me, that he was sent in haste by yourself, upon earnest business; and if I had not supplied him with what he wanted, it would have reflected an indignity upon yourself, rather than upon him. Wherefore, I hope, that the blame will not fall upon me, even though David should be found as culpable as you suspect him; unless an act of pure compassion and humanity, abstracted from the least thought, knowledge, or imagination of any evil intention, shall be understood to make me privy to a conspiracy: for the service I did him was matter of respect to the king's son-in-law and the king's military officer, not to the person or interest of David."—Jewish Antiq.

· ‡ This party, as Josephus informs us, was commanded by Doeg, the vile informer and murderer. who taking some men, as wicked as himself, to his assistance, slew in all three hundred and eighty-five persons, and, in addition to these, it is thought by some, that the Gibeonites, upon whose account there was so sore a famine in the days of David, David as your majesty's enemy, but as the most | who might now be at Nob, in attendance upon the

^{*} It does not appear likely from what precedes that Abimelech or the priests knew any thing of Saul's displeasure against David, and his determined purpose to destroy him; and therefore as he was the king's son-in-law, and Abimelech thought he was sent on some hasty errand by the king, the giving him bread and a sword was what he owed in duty to Saul, instead of its being an act of treason.

⁺ The speech, which Josephus draws up for the high-priest, upon this occasion, is directed to Saul, and conceived in these words: "I did not receive

One of the sons of Abimelech, named Abiathar, escaped this horrid massacre, and flying to David related to him the dreadful tidings, which, though he deplored more bitterly because he looked on himself as the innocent cause, afforded him not much surprise, as he had seen Doeg there, knew he was acquainted with all that had passed relative to him, and that he would inform the king, whose frantic rage might lead him to the commission of the most enormous actions. However, he assured Abiathar of his favour and protection, that he should share his fortune, and that he would hold his interest equally dear with his own.

While Saul was cruelly employed in the massacre of his guiltless subjects, David was exerting himself in the just and necessary defence of the rights of his country; for, having received intelligence that the Philistines had made a descent upon Keilah,* a city of Judah, and consulted the divine direction by the prophet Gad, he marched to its relief, and repulsed the enemy with great loss of men and cattle.

Saul having received intelligence of David's success against the Philistines, and concluding that he would fortify himself in the city he had relieved, sent an army to invest it. But David, who never entered on any enterprise without seeking that wisdom which is from above, caused young Abiathar to lay the cause before the Lord, who warned them of the perfidy of the inhabitants, and gave them to understand, that if they continued there,

One of the sons of Abimelech, named they would be delivered into the hand of biathar, escaped this horrid massacre, and Saul.

David therefore, pursuant to the divine direction, left that place, and retired into a wood in the desert of Ziph, + where he was preserved from the vengeance of Saul, who could not learn the place of his retirement.

But his good friend Jonathan having private notice of his situation, visited him, and encouraged him with an assurance that the Lord would not suffer him to fall into the hands of his enraged father, seeing he had reserved him for the government of Israel, and the protection of his chosen people. Then renewing their covenant of friendship, they embraced, Jonathan returned home, and David continued in the wood.

The inhabitants of the place, near which David had retired, very officiously sent Saul intelligence where he was, assuring him if he would send a sufficient party to defend them, they would deliver David into his hands. Saul acknowledged their proffered service, but desired that they would most carefully explore his haunts. as he knew him to be very subtle in all his proceedings, and having done this, return and inform him of the particulars. But David, apprized of the base design of the Ziphites, shifted his quarters, and retired farther into the desert of Maon, whither he was so closely pursued by Saul, that nothing but a valley separated the two armies; Saul therefore relying on the superiority of his number, determined to encompass the mountain where David encamped, in order to take or slay his whole party; however, he was diverted from the execution of this plan, by the

* Keilah is stated by Eusebius to be seventeen miles from Eleutheropolis, on the side of Hebron. Jerome makes it only eight miles from Hebron. It is said that the prophet Habakkuk's tomb was shown there.

priests, were at this time slain. It is certain, Saul was now become a mere tyrant, and against those poor people acted more cruelly than he did against the Amalekites, some of whom he spared, even contrary to God's command; but in this case he let none escape, on purpose to deter others from giving the least shelter or assistance to David, and to incite them the rather to come, and give him information, wherever his haunts or lurking-places were.—Josephus's Antiq.

[†] In the story of David, we find Carmel and Maon mentioned as adjoining to Ziph; so that, it is not to be doubted but that by the Ziph in the wilderness, where David now concealed himself, we are to understand the Ziph which was in the neighbourhood of Carmel and Maon, in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, and, according to St Jerome, about eight miles eastward from Hebron.—Wells's Geography.

arrival of a messenger, who brought word that the Philistines had invaded the land, and that his assistance was immediately required. Thus was Saul at this critical juncture compelled to drop his private resentment for the public weal, and by diverting his arms to repel the invader, he afforded David an opportunity of retiring into the strong holds at Engedi.*

* Engedi, (now called Anguedi) in the days of St Jerome, was a large village, situate in the deserts which lay upon the western coasts of the Salt or Dead sea, not very far from the plains of Jericho: and, as the country thereabouts abounded with mountains and these mountains had plenty of vast caves in them, it was a very commodious place for David to retire to, and conceal himself in: Eusebius makes it famous for excellent balm; and Solomon in his song, for vineyards, which, in all probability, were planted by his father, during his retirement in this place, and therefore so peculiarly celebrated by the son. Some of these caves were very capacious: that of Engedi was so large, that David and six hundred men concealed themselves in its sides; and Saul entered the mouth of the cave without perceiving that any one was there.
"At first, "says Mr Cairne," it appears neither lofty nor spacious, but a low passage on the left leads into apartments, where a party could easily remain concealed from those without. of the hill around it corresponds to the description,
—he came to the rocks of the wild goats." Bishop Pococke has described a cave, which he thinks may be this of Engedi; concerning which there is a tradition, that thirty thousand people retired into it to avoid a bad air. Josephus has taken particular notice of similar caverus, which in his time were the abode of robbers. Maundrell has de-scribed a large cavern under a high rocky moun-tain in the vicinity of Sidon, containing two hundred smaller caverns, which are supposed to have been the residence of the original inhabitants. Numerous caves were noticed by Mr Buckingham in the rock to the south of Nazareth; several of which now, as anciently, serve as dwellings to the Nazarenes. Mr Hartley has described a similar cavern, capable of holding one thousand men by actual enumeration, whither the Greeks fled, and found a secure asylum from their Mohammedan enemies. It was probably in some such cave that Lot and his two daughters dwelt after the destruction of Sodom (Gen. xix. 30.); and in similar caverns, excavated by primeval shepherds as a shelter from the scorching beams of the sun, Dr Clarke and his fellow-travellers found a grateful protection from the intense heat of the solar rays; as Captains Irby and Mangles subsequently did, from a violent storm. These caves were sometimes the haunts or strongholds of robbers (as the excavations in the rocks near Bethlehem are to this day), and to them our Lord probably alludes in Matt.

xxi. 13., where he reproaches the Jews with having profaned the temple of God, and made it a den of thieves. Captain Lyon has described similar resi-

Saul soon repulsed the Philistines and then renewed his pursuit of David, with three thousand chosen men, amongst the most mountainous and craggy places of the country. As Saul was on his march, he happened to turn into a cave to ease nature, little suspecting he was so near David, who with a few select men had retired thither for safety.

When David's men saw the king enter the cave alone, thinking that Providence had ordained this circumstance for their rescue, they were for despatching him immediately; but David was influenced by other motives, and declared his abhorrence of the very attempt to execute their proposal, saying, 'God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed.'

However, to convince Saul that his life

dences occupied by a tribe of Troglodytes in Northern Africa. "As the natives live under ground," he says, "a person unacquainted with the circumstance might cross the mountain without once suspecting that it was inhabited. All the dwellingplaces being formed in the same manner, a de-scription of the Sheik's may suffice for the rest. The upper soil is sandy earth of about four feet in depth; under this sand, and in some places limestone, a large whole is dug to the depth of twentyfive or thirty feet, and its breadth in every direction is about the same, being as nearly as can be made, a perfect square. The rock is then smoothed, so as to form perpendicular sides to this space, in which doors are cut through, and arched chambers excavated, so as to receive their light from the doors: these rooms are sometimes three or four of a side, in others, a whole side composes one: the arrangements depending on the number of the inhabitants. In the open court is generally a well, water being found at about ten or twelve feet below the base of the square. The entrance to the house is about thirty-six yards from the pit, and opens above ground. It is arched over head, is generally cut in a winding direction, and is perfectly dark. Some of these passages are sufficiently large to admit a loaded camel. The entrance has a strong wall built over it, something resembling an ice-house. This is covered over-head, and has a very strong heavy door, which is shut at night, or in cases of danger. At about ten yards from the bottom is another door equally strong, so that it is almost impossible to enter these houses. should the inhabitants determine to resist. Few Arab attacks last long enough to end in a siege. All their sheep and poultry being confined in the house at night, the bashaw's army, when here, had recourse to suffocating the inmates, being unable to starve them out."-Horne.

had been in his hand, he privately cut off the skirt of his robe.

This action, though in itself inoffensive, gave David much concern on reflection, because he thought he had offered an indignity to the majesty of his king. As soon as Saul left the cave, David likewise came out, and calling to him at a distance, reverently bowed before his lord and king, showed him the skirt of his robe, and declared his innocence in such submissive, vet generous terms, as impressed the obdurate heart of Saul, who, bursting into tears, with the utmost compunction, acknowledged his guilt and David's justice. Then, as if convinced from the great deliverance God had wrought for David, it was his will he should succeed to the throne of Israel, he conjured him by the most sacred ties not to avenge on him or his family the wrongs he had done him, when he should have it in his power.

To obviate all fear on the part of Saul, David swore unto him he would do according to his desire, upon which Saul returned home; but David, not judging it safe to rely on his specious behaviour, retired again with his people to their strong holds.

About this time died the prophet Samuel, a person in great reputation among the Hebrews, for his probity and virtue; and the people gave an eminent proof of the esteem they had for him in the magnificence and expense of his funeral.

They buried him at Ramah, in his own country, and mourned for him afterward a long time, not with the ceremony of a formal public sorrow, but every individual had a distinct and a particular share in the loss; for he was a man of a natural benignity and justice, and most remarkably in God's favour for his virtues.

After the death of Eli, he governed twelve years alone; and then in the reign of Saul, eighteen years more.*

CHAPTER III.

David's extraordinary adventure with Nabal, after whose decease he marries his wife Abigail.-Repeated instance of duty in David towards Saul .- David repairs to Gath .-Saul destroys the witches, afterwards seeks to one .- Samuel is raised and foretells the ruin of Saul .- David meets with a distressful circumstance. -- Overcomes his enemies. -- Death of Saul and Jonathan.

THERE lived at that time near the place where David frequented, a certain man of the city of Maon, who was very wealthy

four months before Saul; but, by the generality of Christian Chronologers, he is supposed to have died about two years before the death of that prince, and in the ninety-eighth year of his age; twenty years of which had been spent in the government of Israel, before Saul's inauguration, after which he lived about eighteen. while he lived an excellent governor, and, through his whole administration, superior to vanity, cor-ruption, or any private views. Those that attend to his life may observe, that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obstinacy, and severe without harshness; the author of Ecclesiasticus has consecrated this eulogy to his memory :- 'Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, beloved of the Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people. By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord had respect unto Jacob. By his faithfulness he was found a true prophet, and by his word he was known to be faithful in vision. He called upon the mighty God, when his enemies pressed upon him on every side, when he offered the sucking lamb: and the Lord thundered from heaven, and with a great noise made his voice to be heard. He destroyed the rulers of the Syrians, and all the princes of the Philistines. Before his long sleep, he made protestations in the sight of the Lord and his anointed, and after his death he prophesied, and showed the king his end,' Eccles. xlvi. 13. &c. But, besides the things that are recorded of this prophet in the first book of Samuel, there are some other passages concerning him in the first book of Chronicles; as, that he enriched the tabernacle with several spoils, which he took from the enemies of Israel during his administration, that he assisted in regulating the distribution of the Levites, which David afterwards prescribed for the service of the temple; and lastly, that he wrote the history of David, in conjunction with the prophets Nathan and Gad: but, as he died before David came to the throne, this can only be meant of the beginning of that history, which by the other two prophets might be continued. There is great probability that he composed the twentyfour first chapters of the first book of Samuel, which contains several historical facts wherein he himself had a large share - Stackhouse.

^{*} The Jews are of opinion that Samuel died only

in herds and possessions, who had in his ground three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats.

David was so much his friend, that he set his own people to assist in looking after his flocks; forbidding them on their peril, either for hunger or on any other pretence whatever, to touch so much as one hair of them; no, though they were absolutely sure of not being detected; continually inculcating on them the duty and obligation they lay under of living according to the rules of justice, and in conformity to the will of God, who was never pleased with any man that coveted, or laid violent hands on the goods of his neighbour.

By this discipline, David restrained those about him from violence, and kept them within bounds; imagining all this while, that the kindness he had shown, and the good and generous offices he had done, were conferred on a person of worth and honesty, who would be sure to make him grateful acknowledgments, and a suitable return.

But Nabal (for that was the man's name) was a brutal, ill-natured wretch; yet the husband of a notable, discreet, prudent, and agreeable woman. As he was one day shearing his sheep, David sent ten of his people to Nabal with the compliment of a thousand good wishes to him, and desiring only some moderate supply of provisions out of his abundance; for his shepherds could inform him, that all the while they had been together in the desert, they had been so far from doing him any injury, that they had rather kept and preserved his sheep for him; closing the discourse with an assurance, that what friendship soever he should do for David upon this occasion, should be abundantly acknowledged.

The answer that Nabal returned them was rude and churlish, like himself. 'David!' says Nabal, 'why, who is that same David, I wonder?' They told him he was one of the sons of Jesse. 'Yes, yes,' says Nabal, 'your runaway-servants look!

upon themselves to be brave fellows, I warrant ye.'

This contemptuous affront enraged David to that degree that he immediately put himself at the head of four hundred men, leaving two hundred more behind with the baggage (his number being now increased to six hundred), with a vow and determination, that very night to cut off Nabal, with his house and family.

Now David's indignation against him was not so much for his barbarity and ingratitude, where he had been so frankly obliged, but for the virulence of so insolent an outrage against a man that never did him an injury.

While matters were in this posture, one of Nabal's shepherds and servants carried the story of this encounter to the mistress: telling her, how David being distressed for provisions, and having sent to her husband to desire some small relief of him, was not only refused by him, but answered with insufferable and opprobrious revilings: though David had ever dealt honourably and respectfully by him in guarding and securing his flocks from injuries and violence; telling her further, what apprehensions they had of the mischief, that the sense of this indignity might bring upon herself and her husband.

So soon as Abigail (for that was her name) the wife of Nabal, had heard their story, she presently called for the asses out; caused them to be laden with presents, and, unknown to her husband, (who was at that time inebriated and senseless,) she put herself upon the way to find out David, whom she met coming down the straits of the mountain, and four hundred men following him, with an intent to take vengeance upon Nabal.

Abigail no sooner saw him approach, but leaping from her ass, she threw herself prostrate upon the ground, and 'humbly besought David to pass over the words of her husband, as one whose name was suited to his nature:' Nabal in Hebrew signifying a fool and a madman. 'She

pleaded for herself, that she saw none of the messengers that were sent to her husband; begged pardon, and desired David to give God thanks for sending her as the instrument to keep his hands from blood: 'And Sir,' says she, 'may you still preserve yourself clear of that pollution, that God may turn the vengeance that threatens Nabal upon the heads of your enemies. Be pleased, I beseech you, to accept of the good-will of your poor servant, with these small presents, and upon my humble request to pass over the offence of my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure; for there is nothing so becoming the character of the person, that Providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion.' David was pleased to receive the present, telling her, that she had reason to bless God that put it into her heart to meet him; otherwise, says he, 'you should never have lived to have seen another day; for I have sworn to myself to lay your house in ruins this very night, and not to leave one soul alive in the family of that ungrateful man, who had cast so many indignities upon me, and those that belong to me. You are now come in a blessed hour to allay my rage, and put a stop to my resolution; but yet, after all, though I am content for your sake to forgive Nabal's fault against me, there is a judgment still behind that attends him; and his ill-manners will be his "uin some other way."

With these words David discharged Abigail, who went directly home, and found her husband carousing among his com nions, and so sottishly drunk with wine, that there was no speaking to him that night; but the next morning, when he became sober, she told him the whole story from beginning to end; which struck him with such astonishment, that he was seized with a dead palsy upon it, and died in ten days.

David, upon the news of his death, was heard to say, that the judgment was right-cous, and that God had avenged his cause,

while he that received the injury came off with clean hands.*

After the decease of the husband David sent a message and an invitation to Abigail, desiring her to come over to him; for he would take her for his lawful wife.† Her answer was, that she was not worthy so much as to wash the feet of David; but she went to him, however, with all her equipage, and became his wife: an honour that she was indebted to for the graces both of her mind and person; for it was her prudence, modesty, and beauty, that recommended her to this preferment.

David had also a former wife, Ahinoam; but as for his late wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, her father gave her away to Phalti, the son of Laish of Gallim.

It was not long after this, when the men of Ziph brought a fresh account to Saul, that David was come into their

^{*} The world may gather from this example, that there is no avoiding the stroke of Divine justice; and that it is Providence that governs the world, not passion or chance; but that both good and wicked men are either rewarded or punished in their own kind.

⁺ Marriage-contracts seem to have been made in the primitive ages with little ceremony. The suitor himself, or his father, sent a messenger to the father of the woman, to ask her in marriage. The kings and nobles of Israel were not more ceremonious on these occasions. When David, as narrated in the text, heard that Nabal was dead. he sent messengers to Abigail to solicit her hand in marriage : 'And they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee to take thee to him to wife. And she arose and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.' After the death of Urijah, the same prince sent and fetched Bathsheba to his house, and she became his wife. This entirely corresponds with the mode in which the oriental princes generally form their matrimonial alliances. The king of Abyssinia, says Bruce, "sends an officer to the house where the lady lives, who announces to her that it is the king's pleasure she should remove instantly to the palace. She then dresses herself in the best manner, and immediately obeys. Thenceforward he assigns her an apartment in the palace, and gives her an house elsewhere, in any part she chooses. The nearest resemblance to marriage is when he makes her iteghe, or queen; for whether in the court or in the camp, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence, that he, the king, has chosen his handmaid, naming her, for his queen; upon which the crown is put upon her head, but she is not anointed."-Paxton.

he might be easily taken. Upon this intelligence, Saul immediately marched thither with three thousand men; and the night coming on he pitched his tents at a place called Hachilah.

When David came to understand that Saul was moving that way, he sent out scouts for a particular information where the enemy lay; and word being brought that they had posted themselves near Hachilah, David got up in the night, and with only Abishai, the son of his sister Zeruiah, and Abimelech the Hittite, went directly without the privity of any other person into the camp of the enemy; where they found the king in his tent, with his general Abner, and his guards about him, all fast asleep.*

Abishai, seeing the king in his bed, and his lance by him, would needs have nailed him immediately to the ground; + but David held his hands, and said, 'Abishai, Saul is God's king, and his person sacred, let the man be never so wicked; he is only accountable for the ill management of his power to him who gave him the power itself. But for a proof, however, that I

quarters again, and that with a little help have him at mercy, though I will not make a bad use of the advantage, I will now take away his lance and pitcher of water from his bed's side.'

David, leaving the camp as silently and unperceived as he came into it, and betwixt the darkness of the night, and the strength of his own resolution, without any apprehension of danger, passed the river; and then getting up to the top of a mountain, within hearing of the camp, he called out from thence to Abner and the guards, to wake them. Abner started upon this clamour, and hearing himself called by name, cried with a loud voice, to know who it was that would speak with him. Answer was made, it was David, the son of Jesse, one of your fugitives. 'Are you a fit man,' replied David, 'to be a prince's favourite, a general of his army, and to take upon you the guard of his royal person, and under all these honourable obligations to lie sleeping at your ease when your master's life is in danger? Can you tell me what is become of the king's lance and the pitcher of water that were this night taken by the enemy out of his tent; and even from his very bed's side? and you and your guards fast asleep, without knowing any thing of the matter? Now whether this were neglect or treachery, it is equally the same, you certainly deserve to lose your head for it.'

When Saul found it was David's voice, and himself now a second time betrayed into the hands of the very person whose life he himself was seeking, mistaking the best friend he had for the most mortal of his enemies; Saul, I say, was so sensible of David's goodness, under the greatest of provocations, that he gave him public thanks for his life; bidding him not to fear for the time to come, but to return to his habitation; for he found by experience. that his life was not dearer to himself than it was to David; whom now he should look upon as his preserver, and a person of so tried and unchangeable affection to him, that notwithstanding all banishments.

+ When we consider the just foundations of David's resentment against Saul, and the arguments and instigations of Abishai, we cannot help thinking that God put these opportunities in the power of David, on purpose to make trial of his virtue and clemency: nor can we, at the same time, fail to admire the glorious conquest which he made over these passions, which to many others would probably have proved irresistible.

^{*} Homer, speaking of Diomede's followers, says, "They found him without before the tent, with his arms, and his followers sleeping around him; their shields were placed under their heads, and their spears were fixed upright in the ground upon their brazen points. The hero himself reposed in profound sleep upon the skin of a wild buil." An Arab camp is always circular, when the dispositions of the ground will permit, the chieftain being in the middle, and the troops at a respectful distance around him. Their lances are fixed near them in the ground, all the day long, ready for action. This was precisely the form and arrangement of Saul's camp, as described by the sacred historian. As it is an universal custom in the East to make the great meal at night, and consequently to fall into a deep sleep immediately after it, a handful of resolute men might easily beat up a camp of many thousands .- Paxton.

many attempts upon his life, he returned him nothing but benefits for injuries.

David desired him to send for the lance and the pitcher, appealing to the righteous God to judge between them, and to bear him witness, that when he took away Saul's lance and pitcher, he could with as much ease have taken away his life.

After this deliverance, Saul returned safe to his palace. But David, not choosing to venture himself any longer in a place where he thought himself still in danger of being taken, removed with his six hundred men into the land of the Philistines, to dwell there, with the consent of his people.

Being now come to Achish, the king of Gath, one of the five principal cities belonging to the Philistines, the king entertained David, and his two wives, Abinoam and Abigail.

Saul all this while had taken notice of David's motions; but after two disappointments already, and falling into the very snare himself that he had set for David, he left his adversary to take his fortune, and desisted from the pursuit.

David found himself uneasy in the city of Gath, and so took the freedom to desire of the king this addition to his former bounties, that he would be pleased to assign him some place or portion of ground in his dominions, for himself and those that belonged to him to live upon; for it gave him some uneasiness to continue still in a place where he must appear burdensome to the people. So the king gave him Ziklag * to himself and his heirs for

hazards, ill usage, loss of friends, and ever; and David retained so great a kindness for the place, even after he came to be king, as to reserve it for a private possession for himself and posterity ever afterwards.

David's stay in Ziklag was four months and twenty days, whence he made several inroads upon their neighbours, the Geahurites, the Gezerites, and Amalekites, carrying away vast booties of mules and camels; but taking no prisoners, for fear they should discover the whole mystery to He made the king presents Achish. however out of the spoil, who would ask him now and then where he met with all that pillage. His answer was, that he had made incursions into the southerly parts of Judea, and there he found it. There was no great difficulty to make Achish believe a story that his heart was so desirous to have true; for it was reasonable to think, that after all this havock and outrage committed by David upon his countrymen, he would never dare to look homeward again; and by that means have nothing left to trust to but the service of king Achish.

The Philistines were about this time preparing for a war against the Israelites, and a general rendezvous appointed upon such a day, in Shunem, where Achish was to draw them into a body, and thence to lead them out against the enemy. The king spoke to David also to join him, with his six hundred men over and above his own troops; who not only promised it with great readiness, but told Achish further that the time was now at hand that would put it into his power to make him an honourable return for all his bounties.

The king, on the other hand, passing his royal word to David, the more to

^{*} Ziklag was situate in the extreme parts of the tribe of Judah southwards, not far from Hormah, where the Israelites received a defeat, while they sojourned in the wilderness. In the division of the land of Canaan it was first given to the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 31. and afterwards to that of Simeon, Josh. xix. 5. but the Philistines seem all along to have kept possession, so that it never came into the hands of either tribe, until, by the gift of Achish, it became the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors. Why David desired of Achish the liberty to retire to this place, was to

avoid the envy which the number of his attendants might possibly occasion; to secure his people from the infection of idolatry; to enjoy the free exercise of his own religion; and to gain an opportunity of enterprising something against the enemies of God, without the knowledge or observation of the Philistines .- Calmet's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.

battle, he would invest him with great honours, and in particular give him the command of his guards.

It is to be observed, that Saul had banished all diviners, soothsayers, fortunetellers, and all other people whatsoever, of such vain pretensions, out of his dominions; but the prophets he still retained.

News being brought to Saul, that the Philistines were advanced as far as Shunem,* and encamped upon the plain there, he went out to meet them, and drew up near the mountain of Gilboa, directly opposite the camp of the enemy.

The armies being now in sight of each other, Saul found the Philistines so much superior to the Israelites, that his heart misgave him; and this terror put him upon consulting the prophets about the event of this battle. The question being put, but no answer returned, the silence of the oracle was worse to Saul than all the rest; for he looked upon it as a foreboding presage of an evil fate at hand, that he fell into a downright despondency upon it; and yet such was the hardness of his heart, that though God had withdrawn his favour from him in such a signal manner, and he himself conscious of it, he had still recourse, after all this, to conjurors and wizards, to learn the event of things, and set people at work to find him out some cunning woman, who could foretell things to come; for there were a sort of people that took upon them to call upon the ghosts of the dead, and thereby to resolve such questions about future contingencies as the querists should please to ask them.

While he was upon this inquiry, one of

oblige him, that if he succeeded in this his family informed him that he had heard of such a woman at Endor. Upon this information Saul disguised himself, and taking two confidents along with him, went directly to the woman of Endor, without acquainting any other person.

> The first thing he asked of her was, as a trial of her skill, in calling up the ghost of such a person as he should name. The woman excused herself, out of a reverence to the king's edict, which had forbidden this way of divination upon pain of banishment; wherefore she besought him not to betray her into a snare, for if she should pretend to give a resolution, and be detected, the practice would infallibly be her

> But this refusal would not satisfy Saul, who, pressing her still more and more, with bitter imprecations upon himself, that no mortal should ever know of one syllable that passed between them, either question or answer, she was prevailed upon at last to venture herself upon the credit of such assurances, that she was safe in his hands.

> Immediately upon her consenting to his request, Saul bade her call up the ghost of Samuel. And upon her calling him up, the ghost appeared.+ The woman

^{*} Shunem was a city in the borders of the tribe of Issachar, about five miles to the south of mount Hermon, according to St Jerome and Eusebius; who tell us likewise, that Gilboa was a ridge of mountains, six miles distant from Scythopolis, anciently called Bethshan; and that Endor was a town in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of mount Gilbon .- Wells's Geography and Le Clerc's Commentary.

⁺ It is much disputed who it was that appeared on this occasion; for the whole narrative manifests that it was no human imposture. Many expositors, ancient and modern, have maintained, that it was Satan personating Samuel; though the text does not give the least intimation of it. It is, however, by no means advisable to give those men any countenance, who, to support a favourite system, put a forced construction upon the words of holy writ, very different from their obvious meaning: and scarcely any of their interpretations can sound harsher, than the insertion in every place, where Samuel is mentioned, 'that it was Satan personating Samuel.'-It is indeed argued, that the woman's incantations could have 'no power over a glorified saint:' but to this it may fairly be answered, that neither could an evil spirit appear at her call, without the Lord's permission. Though the woman was not the cause of Samuel's being sent, Saul's inquiry might be the occasion of The word disquieted seems to be used merely in accommodation to the general notions of man-kind on that subject: and the woman's surprise and terror proved that it was an unusual and unexpected appearance, and not the ordinary effect of her art. It is, however, further urged, that

was under an astonishment at the sight of so divine a figure, and turning toward Saul, asked him, 'If he were not Saul the king?' Saul made answer, that he was She answered, she saw the resemblance

the apparition's discourse tended to drive Saul to despair, which is one of Satan's temptations; and that it contained no exhortations to repentance, which were usual with the prophets. But to this it may be replied, that Elijah's message to Ahaziah, Daniel's address to Belshazzar, and even Christ's discourse in the presence of Judas, were equally calculated to drive each of them to despair; and equally void of exhortations to repent, and proposals of mercy. Saul had despised Samuel's solemn warnings in his life-time; yet now he hoped, as it were, in defiance of God, to obtain some counsel and encouragement from him: and why might not God permit the soul of his departed prophet to appear and confirm his former sentence, and denounce Saul's irrevocable doom? It was not beyond the power of God, nor, that I can see, at all unworthy of him; but rather a declaration of his immutable and irreversible truth and justice. Satan could not have predicted the several events, which came to pass accordingly, as far as we know, without being inspired by God to do so: and it would give far more countenance to consulting witches, to suppose that he inspired Satan to prophesy by them, than to conclude that Samuel was sent with this tremendous message from God, when Saul consulted one of them. Indeed this would most powerfully discourage such attempts; as the request of the rich man in hell to Abraham, being entirely vain, is calculated to discourage praying to departed saints. The local situation of departed spirits is so concealed from us, that the circumstance of the spirit apparently 'arising out of the earth,' forms no real objection against its being the soul of Samuel: and the expression, 'shall thou and thy sons be with me,' means no more, than that they should be in the eternal world. The transaction was suited to impress the idea of a future state on the mind of all who should ever hear or read of it; and it determined nothing about the different conditions of the righteous and the wicked. Upon the whole, there appears much solemnity in God's for once permitting the soul of a departed prophet to make his appearance, as a witness from heaven, and in sending him to confirm the word which he spoke on earth, (evincing that the words of the prophets would surely take effect;) and to sit in judgment upon a proud enemy of God, who foolishly sought encouragement in his impenitency, by the most atrocious crimes. This interpretation is certainly obvious, and suited to the apprehensions of the unlearned reader, and according to the general simplicity of the scriptures: and nothing short of unanswerable arguments and objections, should constrain us to suppose, that when the Holy Spirit said Samuel, he meant Satan, not speaking by Samuel, as he did by the serpent and by the demoniacs; but actually counterfeiting his shape, and speaking with his voice, though Samuel himself was in every sense absent from the place. The venerable appearance of Samuel, or some-

bling, and in disorder, desired to know what might be the cause of that confusion She answered, she saw the resemblance of an ancient man, with a radiant glory about him, ascending from the earth. Saul demanded of her what kind of figure, of what years, and in what habit he seemed to be? she said, 'A man in years, of a venerable aspect, and in a sacerdotal vest.' By this description Saul concluded it to be the figure of Samuel, and fell down upon his face and worshipped. The spectre demanded what he gave him this trouble for, to take him from his place of rest? Saul replied, that it was absolute necessity; for he was threatened with a mighty army, and wanted advice what to do; for God had forsaken him, and he had neither prophets, dreams, nor visions to fly to for direction. For these reasons, he had now recourse, as he said, to Samuel, as his last refuge, and a person that he had ever found favourable to himself and his affairs. Samuel, foreseeing that Saul had but one day more to live, told him, 'How vain a thing it was for him who knew himself forsaken of God, to launch out into unseasonable curiosities.

thing which he spoke, convinced the woman that it was Saul who consulted her. 'She perceived, by the reverence the spectre paid him, who he was:' for so Abarbinel interprets it, 'he bowed with his face to the ground, in honour of Saul, whereby the woman concluded that it was the king.' Thus then, if the devil personated Samuel, he worshipped Saul, not Saul him! A likely thing, truly, that either Samuel, or Satan personating him, should thus reverence Saul! It shows to what difficulties the supporters of the latter opi-nion are reduced. Saul's bowing down before Samuel, was not indeed an act of religious worship, any more than Abigail's bowing down before David. The answer of Samuel was in every respect suitable to his character, and to the occasion. It was entirely in vain for Saul to consult the servant, when the Lord was become his enemy; the Lord was only doing to him as he declared he would; and as Samuel knew him to be finally given up, he neither gave him counsel nor comfort. The woman first saw the appearance; but afterwards Saul seems to have seen it, as well as to have heard the words spoken. Some think that neither Saul's servants nor the woman heard what passed .- Scott

about what should hereafter become of the depth of his despondence Saul was thing else will serve your turn, I am to tell you, that the Almighty God has depossession of the government, and bring the present war to a happy conclusion, while you yourself are to lose your crown and your life together, for your disobedience to God in the business of the Amalekites, and for the contempt of his commands, which from my lips you received by his order, while I was living. Know further, that you are to be with me to-morrow;* your army shall be overthrown, and yourself and your sons fall in the battle.'

These awful words struck Saul speechless, and fainting, he fell to the ground; whether this proceeded from so dreadful a sentence, or from weakness of body, may be a question, though most probably the latter, for he had eat nothing for twenty-four hours. But at last, coming a little to himself, the woman very earnestly pressed him to take some refreshment to support nature; desiring no other consideration for the dangerous office she had performed him, than to put him in a condition of strength and ability to return to his army.

She was thoroughly sensible of the hazard she had run in the exercise of a forbidden profession; and especially in the violation of a decree at the desire (though inadvertently) of him that made it.

After a great many importunities, in

him. 'But,' says the ghost, 'since no- prevailed on to take some nourishment. Accordingly, the woman, though poor, killed her only calf, dressed it, and set it termined that David shall be put into before Saul and his servants, with her whole fortune in that treat; who took his repast, and returned that night to the army.+

> The Philistines having drawn their troops together from all quarters, according to their distribution into tribes, kingdoms, and governments, Achish, the king of Gath, with his men after the rest, and David with his band of six hundred after Achish: several of the Philistine commanders taking notice of a mixture of Israelites among them, inquired from whence they came? who sent for them? and what they did there? Achish made answer, 'That the young man (pointing to David) was a servant of Saul's who was fallen under his displeasure, and forced to fly for his life. He came to me,' says Achish, 'with the people he has about him, for sanctuary; so I received him, and provided for him; and now upon this occasion he has promised me his utmost assistance against Saul, in requital for his protection, and to gratify his revenge.'

^{*} In this passage, the word to-morrow, (as some interpreters imagine) is not to be taken in a strict sense, because (as they conceive) this battle was not fought till some time after; but there seems to be no reason why to-morrow should not be taken literally: for, as Endor was at no great distance from the Israelites' camp, Saul might go that night, consult the witch, stay, and eat with her, and get back to the camp before it was light. The next day the battle begins; Saul is vanquished; and seeing his army routed, despairs, and stabs himself. All this might very well be done in the space of twelve or fourteen hours; and therefore I see no occasion why we should depart from the plain signification of the words.—Calmet's Commentary.

[†] We must not pass over the candour, the goodnature, and the greatness of the woman's mind, without some note of admiration. The king had forbidden her the practice of an art that was the only maintenance of herself and family. Here comes a guest and a stranger to her, that the had never seen before; but a person in misery, and one that had need of her advice in the way that he himself had forbidden; for it proved to be the king. She received him, treated him, and relieved him; and all this she did willingly and cheerfully; nay, and so frankly too, that she gave him all she had, and without any prospect or contemplation of a reward, by gaining the king's favour; for she knew he was doomed to die; besides that, over and above the piety of these offices, she did all this for the very man whose prohibition had been the ruin of her. This proceeding was quite contrary to the custom of the world, that makes charity an interest, and gives or relieves only to get by the bargain, putting out virtue, as they do money, to interest. We may reckon that we have recommended to us in the great example of this gener-ous woman the honour and humanity of doing good offices to all people in necessity; besides, that a sincere and unaffected charity is a virtue of all others the most acceptable in God's sight.

The Philistines were one and all against trusting a professed enemy, and were rather for sending him back, for they did not know, they said, what mischief the treachery of such a party might do upon such an occasion. And for the difference betwixt him and his master, the service he might do him upon this opportunity, would compound for forty such breaches; wherefore Achish should do well, they said, to consider what he was doing, and without more words to send him back to the habitation he had assigned him; for this was the David, they said, that the virgins cried up so in their songs, for killing so many thousands of the Philistines. Achish could not oppose the force and reason of the objection; and therefore he thought fit to take David aside, and converse with him upon that subject, saying,

"Young man, upon the certain proof and experience that I have received of your fidelity and courage, I have now entertained you as my ally and associate in this expedition, wherefore withdraw yourself immediately to the place I have allotted you, and have a particular care there of the peace of my people, and the country near you, for fear my enemies should take advantage of my absence and press me with troubles at home. You will do me the office of a kind ally, every jot as effectually in that government as if you were my second in the army; and in the mean time, I am as much your friend as ever."

Upon this declaration of Achish, they parted, and David, according to his order, went his way to Ziklag.

But while David was following the camp of the Philistines, the Amalekites fell upon Ziklag, took it, and laid it in ashes; making dreadful havoc in the country thereabouts: they pillaged all wherever they came, and at last went home again with what booty they could carry along with them.

David, at his return, finding the place of his habitation destroyed and desolate, his own wives, and the wives and children of his fellow-soldiers hurried away prisoners, with all that belonged unto them, he broke out into so passionate an extravagance of lamentation and outrage, that he rent his clothes, and wept himself dry, even for want of matter to supply more tears. His followers were ready to stone him too, for the loss of their wives and children; for, they said, he was the cause of all, and the whole miscarriage was laid at his door.

When David had wearied himself wi weeping, he came to the resolution o applying to Heaven for comfort; and desired Abiathar the high-priest to put on his pontifical robes, and consult God in form, and then report of the oracle. The question was, 'whether or not, in case of overtaking the Amalekites upon the pursuit, the Israelites might be allowed to receive their wives and children again, that had been taken from them before, and revenge themselves upon the enemy?'

The high-priest bade David follow them, and prosper. Upon which encouragement he took his six hundred men, and pursued them to the brook Besor;* where they found an Egyptian that had lost his way, and was ready to perish with hunger, having been three days in the desert without eating. They took pity upon him, and after giving him a little refreshment, they asked him who he was? and to whom he belonged? He told them he was an Egyptian born, and a servant to a person who was at the sacking and burning of Ziklag, and the country thereabouts; who left him upon the way in his passage home again, because he was so faint that he could not keep up with the troops.

David made use of this Egyptian for his guide, upon the trace of the Amalek-

^{*} This brook had its source in the mountain of Idumea, and fell into the Mediterranean sea beyond Gaza. Some suppose it to have been the same with the river of the wilderness, or the river of Egypt.

ites, whom, at last, he overtook, and found some feasting, and some dancing with much pride and vanity, in the contemplation of their late booty. In short, while they were drowned in drink and sleep, and wholly set upon their ease and pleasure, and unarmed, David fell upon them in this disorder and confusion, mingling their blood with their wine, so that there escaped, out of their whole number, not above four hundred persons, who were carried of by the swiftness of their camels.* The pursuit continued from noon until night; and in the close of the action they recovered their wives, children, and booty.

David had but four hundred men with him, the other two hundred being left behind for a guard to the baggage.

Upon his return from the spoil, the four hundred that were upon the action, would not allow the two hundred, that were upon easier service, to have any part in the booty, excepting their wives and children.

David looked upon this as an unreasonable proposition; 'For,' said he, 'the victory was given by God, and being a blessing upon the common cause, it is but reasonable that the whole body should partake of the benefit, especially where the one part was upon duty, as well as the other, and at the same time preserved the baggage.'

This decision passed into a law, that is to say, the spoil to be equally divided between them that guarded the baggage, and those that should fight the battle.

David, after his return to Ziklag, sent

* It appears from Diodorus, that the Arabians universally employed camels in war, setting two warriors upon each, back to back, of whom one opposed the advancing enemy, the other repelled the charge of the pursuer. All the Arabians in the army of Xerxes were mounted on camels that equalled in speed the swiftest horses. The Bactrians also fought on camels; and the Parthians, in their wars with the Romans, annoyed with unceasing showers of arrows, from their horses and camels, the legions of their restless and terrible foe.—Script. Illust.

up and down to his friends and acquaintance, in the tribe of Judah, presents out of the spoil.

We shall pass now from the destruction of Ziklag, and the total overthrow of the Amalekites, to a bloody victory obtained by the Philistines over the Israelites.

The armies being joined, the encounter was very sharp. Saul and his sons did all that was possible for brave men to do; but finding themselves oppressed with numbers (for the whole stress lay upon them) they had no more to do than to die honourably, that the enemy should have little reason to boast of their purchase.

In fine, they were so continually surrounded by fresh numbers, that they were forced to submit to the necessity of an insuperable fate.

Upon the fall of Saul's sons, viz. Jonathan, Aminadab, and Malchishua, that were slain in the heat of the battle, the whole army fell into confusion, and fled in a direct rout; the Philistines, pressing upon the rear, made a prodigious slaughter.

Saul shifted for himself a-while, with a small body of his own, but they were soon broken by the darts and arrows; of the

† This was a very popular and judicious step in David, as he hereby not only discharged himself of the obligations of gratitude, but endeavoured to secure their interest and favour, in case there should happen a vacancy in the throne.

[†] There is no mention of archers in any of the Philistine armies or battles before this; in which they are said to have pressed hard upon Saul, as doubtless they were of great advantage to the Philistines in making their attack, 1st, Because an assault with this kind of weapon was new and surprising, and therefore generally successful; and 2dly, Because the arrows, destroying the Israelites at a distance, before they came to close fight, threw them naturally into terror and confusion And for this reason some think, that, when David came to the throne, he taught the Israelites the use of the bow, (as we read 2 Sam. i. 18.) that they might not be inferior to the Philistines, nor fall into the like disaster that Saul had done; and for this reason it certainly was, that, when he had made a peace with the Philistines, he took some of their archers (who, in the following books, are frequently mentioned under the name of Cherethites) to be his body guard.—Bishop Patrick...

2 M

Philistines; and finding himself so weak- made a prize of Saul's golden bracelets, he was not able to do execution upon himself, therefore, in this extremity, he called to his armour-bearer to assist him in it, that he might not fall alive into the hands of his enemies. But the servant excused himself, out of the veneration he had for his majesty, and upon that refusal Saul cast himself upon the point of a sword; * but not being able to finish what he had begun, he took notice of a young man, an Amalekite, near at hand, and desired him to take the sword, and despatch him.+ He did it immediately, and

* The learned and ingenious author of 'The Historical Account of the Life of King David,' seems to make it evident, that Saul and his armourbearer died by the same sword, viz. that which belonged to the armour-bearer. "Now it is an established tradition of the Jewish church," says he, "that this armour-bearer was Doeg the Edomite, who, by Saul's command, slew such a number of priests in one day, 1 Sam. xxii. 19. and if so, then Saul and his executioner fell both by the same weapon wherewith they had before massacred the servants of the Lord: even as Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with the same sword with which they treacherously murdered Cæsar; I say treacherously murdered, because they lay in his bosom at the same time that they meditated

+ The Jews give us a high commendation of Saul, and seem to prefer him before David himself in regard to the magnanimity of his death. But it is much to be questioned whether self-murder, which was certainly Saul's case, be an act of mag-nanimity or not. For besides that the laws of all nations have condemned it, as abhorrent to the dictates of nature and reason, of self-love and selfpreservation, the wisest of the heathen world ever looked upon it as an instance of madness and brutality, and, with great wisdom, have concluded, that such an action is so far from savouring of true courage and generosity, that it is the sure effect of a weak and pusillanimous temper of mind; since true greatness of soul, as they justly argue, consists in supporting the evils of adversity, and not in shifting them off, which is a mark of a poor impatient spirit, sinking under the common calamities of life, and not knowing how to bear the blows of bad fortune. 'Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest the uncircumcised come and mock, or abuse me,' was the request which Saul made to his armour-bearer, and shows that it was not bravery and courage, but the fear of insults, and a conscious inability to bear them with a becoming superiority of mind, that made him shun the storm when he saw it approaching, by withdrawing from the stage of life.—Saul's case indeed was very dolorous, but he had not there-

ened with wounds and loss of blood, that and went off with them. When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he laid violent hands upon himself also; and there was not one of the king's guard who outlived his master. This battle was fought near the mountain of Gilboa.

> No sooner had the Israelites of the valley beyond Jordan, and the cities of the plains, intelligence of the death of Saul and his sons, and of the entire destruction of his army, but they withdrew themselves out of their open towns into more secure and strong holds; while the Philistines, took possession, and without any difficulty made themselves masters of the places the others had quitted.

> On the next day after the battle, the Philistines, coming into the field to view the dead, found the bodies of Saul and his sons among the rest. They stripped them, cut off their heads, and sent expresses every way up and down with the

fore any authority to destroy himself. His life was a sacred despositum of God's, and not to be taken away without invading his right, and violating his laws at the same time. For whatever some may think of the silence of the scripture concerning self-murder, there is no question to be made but that it is included in the sixth commandment, under which Saul then lived. The commandment forbids murder in general; and it is certainly as much murder to kill ourselves as to kill another man: and the reason, which the scripture gives, why we are not allowed to do it, in both cases is the same, because 'in the image of God made he man.' For if I must not shed the blood of another, because 'he is made in the image of God;' I must not shed the blood of mine own self, be-cause I also am a man, and 'made in the image of God,' as well as he. The reason therefore why we have not more frequent prohibitions against this sin is plainly this, that whatever sins or offences God, as a lawgiver, prohibits, he prohibits with a penalty, that is, he affixes such a punishment to such a crime, and he who commits the crime is to undergo the punishment in this world, whether it be restitution, loss of limb, or loss of life itself. But now this can never happen in the case of selfmurder, because self-murder prevents all punishment, the man being dead, before any cognizance can be taken of his offence, and therefore prevents all laws concerning it; and can consequently only be included 'under general commands, and forbidden as a sin, whereof God alone can take cognizance in the world to come.—Stackhouse.

news of this defeat. Their arms they de- | creature daring to open his mouth against posited in the temple of Ashtaroth, and their bodies they exposed upon gibbets under the walls of the city of Bethshan,* known at this day by the name of Scythopolis.

This barbarous outrage upon the bodies of Saul and his sons coming to the ears of the men of Jabesh-gilead, raised in them such an indignation at the inhumanity of refusing them the last rites of burial, that some of the most daring and enterprising among them made up a party, and travelling all night, took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls of Bethshan, and carried them away to Jabesh, and burnt them there; + not a

* Bethshan, more generally known by the name of Scythopolis, was a town of Manasseh, but situated in Issachar, Josh. xvii. 11, 16. Judg. i. 27. 1 Kings iv. 12. In 2 Mac. xii. 29. it is reckoned to be 600 furlongs, or 75 miles, from Jerusalem. Josephus says it was 120 furlongs from Tiberias; so that it cannot be so near the lake of Tiberias as some geographers have supposed. It was on the west of Jordan, at the extremity of the great plain. The name of Scythopolis, or the city of the Scythians, came, according to George Syncellus, from the Scythians, who invaded Palestine in the reign of Josiah, son of Amos, king of Judah. Stephens the geographer, and Pliny, call it Nysa; the Hebrews name it Bethshan; he LXX, 'Bethshan, otherwise Scythopolis.' The fruits of Bethshan were the sweetest in the land of Israel; and fine linen garments were made here. Before the Babylonish captivity it was in-cluded within the land of Israel; but after that period it was reckoned without the land; and none of its productions were tithed. Probably the posterity of the Scythians retained their property in it, and its demesnes. Bethshan is now called Bysan, and is described by Burckhardt as situated on rising ground, on the west of the river Jordan. The present village contains 70 or 80 houses, the inhabitants of which are in a miserable condition, owing to the depredations of the Bedouins. The ruins of the ancient city are of considerable extent, along the banks of the rivulet which ran by it, and the valley formed by its branches; and bespeak it to have been nearly three miles in circuit. - Calmet.

+ The burning of dead bodies in funeral piles, it is well known, was a custom prevalent among the Greeks and Romans, upon which occasion they threw frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant articles into the fire: and this in such abundance, that Pliny represents it as a piece of profaneness, to bestow such heaps of frankincense upon a dead body, when they offered it so sparingly to their gods. And though the Jews might possibly learn

them.

Their deaths were lamented by the whole people of the place, who gave their bodies a public and an honourable interment in the chief part of their province. They spent seven days in so strict a solemnity of fasting and mourning, that men, women, and children, were all bound indispensably to observe it.

This was the end of Saul, according to the prediction of Samuel, for his not prosecuting the war against the Amalekites, according to his order, and for the massacre of Abimelech and his family, with the devastation even of the sacerdotal city

He ruled in the days of Samuel, eighteen years, and twenty-two more after his decease, coming to this unhappy end in the same manner as it is here set forth.

CHAPTER IV.

David avenges the death of Saul on the Amalekites .- His elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan .- Is proclaimed king of Judah .-David's success against the king of the other tribes .- Abner revolts to David .- Is slain by Joab .- David revenges the death of Abner. .

from them the custom of burning the bowels, armour, and other things belonging to their kings, in piles of odoriferous spices, yet they very rarely, and only for particular reasons, burnt the dead bodies themselves. We are told, indeed, that the people of Jabesh-gilead 'took the bodies of Saul and his sons (from the place where the Philistines had hung them up), and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there; but by this time their bodies must have been in such a state that they were not fit to be embalmed; or, perhaps, they were apprehensive that if they should embalm them, and so bury them, the people of Bethshan might at some future time dig them up, and fix them a second time against their walls; and therefore, the people of Jabesh might think it more advisable to recede from their common practice, and for greater security to imitate the heathen in this particular. Amos also speaks of the burning of bodies (vi. 10.); but it is evident from the words themselves, and from the context, that this was in the time of a great pestilence, not only when there were few to bury the dead, but when it was un-safe to go abroad and perform the funeral rites by interment, in which case the burning was certainly the best expedient.-Horne.

-The tribes unite under David, who rules with prudence and piety, and is crowned with a scries of success.

Soon after David's arrival at Ziklag from the conquests of the Amalekites, he received the news of the death of Saul, from the very man who had slain him in battle.

When he approached David with every token of grief and humility, and was inquiring concerning the cause of his arrival, as well as his person, he thus related the fatal case: 'I am an Amalekite, and come from the late engagement of the Israelites, in which fell king Saul, and three of his sons together, with many thousands of his inferior ranks. I shall speak no more than what I saw; it was my fortune to be near the king when he was in his extremity. He cast himself upon the point of his own sword; but being faint with his wounds, he could not execute what he had begun; so that upon his earnest desire, I was forced to do the office for him, to keep him from falling alive into the hands of his enemies.'

He showed David at the same time the bracelet, and the crown that he took from the dead body, (to confirm the truth of his story,) which he reserved for a present to David.*

Upon this melancholy news, he rent his clothes, and spent the whole day with his friends in tears and lamentations. But the most sensible part of his affliction was, the loss of Jonathan, his ever dear and faithful friend, and more than once the very preserver of his life.

So transcendent was the virtue of David, and his generosity toward Saul, that not-withstanding so many repeated practices upon his life, he did not only deplore his misfortune, but ordered the criminal to be delivered up to justice; not only upon his own confession, but the more certain evidence of his guilt, in the crown and the bracelet, that he took from Saul, after he was dead; and proving himself to be truly an Amalekite, owning the very principle of a regicide.

David, upon the melancholy occasion, composed several elegies, one of which, cited by the sacred historian, is justly deemed an eminent specimen of piety and rhetoric.

When David had paid his last duties to the memory of Saul and his sons, and the term of mourning was expired, he consulted God by the prophet which of the cities of Judah should be allotted him for his habitation: and it was answered Hebron. + Wherefore he left Ziklag im-

account whatever, was in itself an execrable crime, and therefore to clear himself from the imputation of being any ways accessory to so foul a fact, (as his enemies would have been apt to imagine, had he given countenance to this pretended king-killer,) he ordered him immediately to be put to death, and therein at least acted the part of a good politician, if not of a righteous judge.—Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentary.

^{*} By the account which we have of king Saul's death, namely, that he 'fell upon a sword,' and expired, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. it seems very evident that the whole story of this Amalekite was a fiction of his own inventing, on purpose to ingratiate him-self with David, the presumptive successor to the throne: but then the question is, how he came by Saul's crown and bracelet, since it is incongruous to think that he would wear them in the time of action, and thereby expose himself as a public mark. As therefore it is presumed that they were carried into the field of battle by some of his attendants, in order to be put on in case he had obtained the victory, and returned in triumph; so the Jews have a conceit that Doeg, the infamous murderer of the priests at Nob, I Sam. xxii. 18. who, at this time was his armour-bearer, had them in his possession, and before he killed himself gave them to his son, (this young Amalekite) and or-dered him to carry them to David, but to his cost found that David's reception was quite different to what he expected. For, being shortly to ascend the throne himself, he was willing to have it believed that to slay the Lord's anointed upon any

[†] Hebron was one of the most ancient cities of Canaan, being built seven years before Tanis, the capital of Lower Egypt, Numb. xiii. 22. It is thought to have been founded by Arba, an ancient giant of Palestine, and hence to have been called Kirjath-arba, Arba's city, which name was afterwards changed into Hebron. Hebron was situated on an eminence, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, and about the same distance north of Beersheba. It is now called El Ilhalil, and contains a population of about 400 Arabs. "They are so mutinous," says D'Arvieux, "that they rarely pay the duties without force, and commonly a reinforcement from Jerusalem is necessary

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two wives, and the guards of his person that he had about him; whither the whole tribe came soon after, and a full convention with one voice proclaimed him king.

David had heard by this time of the generous and respectful behaviour of the men of Jabesh toward Saul and his sons, and how bravely they rescued their bodies from infamy, in the face of the enemy, and gave them an honourable burial; so that he sent them particular acknowledgments, in his own name, for what they had done in honour of those princes, as an obligation that should for ever be remembered to their advantage. The same messenger gave them to understand, that the tribe of Judah had declared David their king.

In this juncture, Abner, the son of Ner, and Saul's general, a man of great courage and resolution, having heard of the death of Saul, Jonathan, and two other of his sons, in the late battle, posted to the camp to look after Ishbosheth, at that time the only survivor of Saul's male issue.

When he found him, to secure him from danger he crossed the river Jordan with him, and got him declared king of all Israel,

The people are brave, and when in revolt extend their incursions as far as Bethlehem, and make amends by their pillage for what is exacted from them. They are so well acquainted with the windings of the mountains, and know so well how to post themselves to advantage, that they close all the passages and exclude every assistance from reaching the Soubachi. . . The Turks dare not dwell here, believing that they could not live a week if they attempted it. The Greeks have a church in the village." The mutinous character of this people, one would think, was but a continuation of their ancient disposition; which might render them fit instruments for serving David against Saul, and Absalom against David. The advantage they possessed in their knowledge of the passes may account also for the protracted resistance which David made to Saul, and the necessity of the latter employing a considerable force in order to dislodge his adversary. David was so well aware of this advantage of station, that when Absalom had possessed himself of Hebron, he did not think of attacking him there, but fled in all haste from Jerusalem, northward.— Calmet

mediately, and repaired thither, with his the tribe of Judah excepted, appointing Mahanaim* for his residence as much as the camp.

Abner was so incensed against the tribe of Judah, for the choice of their king, that he resolved to make war upon them for it, and detached a body of chosen men for the encounter.

Joab, the son of Zeruiah, had the command of David's army, taking his two brothers. Abishai and Asahel, along with him. When they were advanced to a certain fountain of Gibeon, the two armies being in sight of each other, drew up; but as they stood in order, and ready to engage, Abner proposed a trial beforehand between an equal number of each side, to see which were the braver men of the two. So that by consent they sent out twelve and twelve to dispute the point, and in sight of the two armies.

They began the combat with their darts, and then fell in with their swords, every man taking his adversary by the hair, and stabbing one another, till they all fell dead upon the spot. The armies joined them, and for some time fought furiously on both sides; but in the end, Abner was totally routed. Joab, and his two brothers, closely pursuing them, encouraged their men, both to the chase and execution. But no man stuck so close to him as Asahel, who was very nimble and swift of foot,+ and having singled him out,

the warrior a great advantage over his slower and

^{*} This was a place in the tribe of Gad, which had its name from the appearance of an host of angels to Jacob, and the reasons for Abner's retreating hither, in the beginning of the new king's reign, were, that he might secure the people on that side of the Jordan, and especially the gallant inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, who were great lovers of Saul, and attached to his family; that he might prevent the Philistines from falling upon the king, whom he had under his protection, in the infancy of his reign; and chiefly, that he might be at a great distance from David, have the new king more absolutely under his command, and a better opportunity of raising recruits among a people, not only brave and courageous, but very well affected to the cause which he had espoused.—
Calmet's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.

† Swiftness of foot was highly valued, as it gave

either to the right hand or to the left.

When Abner found himself so resolutely pursued, he offered him a suit of arms to desist; but seeing he could not prevail, he fairly advised him not to put him to the necessity of doing him a mischief for the saving of his own life: after which he could never think of looking his brother in the face.

Abner, perceiving by this time that Asahel was not to be wrought upon, turned his lance in his flight, and struck his pursuer dead upon the spot. This accident retarded the pursuit; for the people gave over the chase to stand gazing at the slain Asahel. But Joab and his brother Abishai were now past the dead body, and so exasperated against Abner for the death of their brother, that with incredible speed and vigour they followed the pursuit till towards sunset.

Upon the hill of Ammah, Abner, with the tribe of Benjamin, took the advantage of a rising ground to observe the enemy, and from thence to reason the case with Joab, representing to him, 'That this outrageous animosity was already gone too far among the people of the same blood and profession; and that he had entreated Asahel to desist from the pursuit; but he being obstinately resolute, still continued, and thereby forced him for self-preserva-

pressed close after him, without turning tion, to slay him at his feet. Joab could not oppose the reasonableness of Abner's plea, and therefore caused a retreat to be sounded, and encamped upon the same place that night. But Abner continued his march over the river Jordan, to the palace of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul. The day following he took a view of the dead (which he caused to be buried) computing that Abner lost three hundred and sixty men, and David nineteen; without reckoning Asahel, whose body was carried by Joab and Abishai to Bethlehem, and there laid in the sepulchre of their fathers; from whence they returned to king David at Hebron.

> This dispute between the adherents of David and those of Saul was the cause of a seditious and bloody war amongst the Israelites. But David's army waxed gradually stronger than that of Saul, and gained many advantages over their opponents.

David in the mean time had six sons by as many wives: Amnon, the son of Ahinoam; Chileab, the son of Abigail; Absalom, the son of Maacah; Adonijah, the son of Haggith; Shephatiah, the son of Abital; and Ithream, the son of Eglah.

In the prosecution of this civil war, it was the prudence, the interest, and the popularity of Abner, that supported the pretensions of Saul's family, and kept the people in their obedience to Ishbosheth. But this prince being informed that Abner lived in a scandalous familiarity with Rizpah, one of his father's late concubines,* reprimanded him so severely for it,

more unwieldy antagonist. It is accordingly mentioned to the honour of Asahel, that he was swifter of foot than a wild roe;—a mode of expression perfectly synonymous with the epithet of 'the swift-footed Achilles,' which is given by Homer to his hero, not fewer than thirty times in the course of the Iliad; and the sweet singer of Israel, in his poetical lamentation over those two great captains, Saul and Jonathan, takes particular notice of this warlike quality: 'They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.' Nor were the ancient Greeks ess attentive to a qualification which the state of the military art in those days rendered so valuable. The foot races in the Olympic games were instituted by warlike chieftains, for the very purpose of inuring their subjects to the fatigues of war, and particularly of increasing their speed, which was regarded as an excellent qualification in a warrior, both because it served for a sudden attack and a nimble retreat .- Paxton.

^{*} To have any commerce with the relicts of princes, of what denomination soever they were, was in those days looked upon as an indignity offered to the royal family, and an affectation of the kingdom; and what notion the world then had of marrying any royal relict, is evident from the case of Adonijah, whom Solomon put to death for desiring but to ask for Abishag, one of David's concubines, though he had employed Bathsheba, the king's mother, to be his intercessor, and was himself his brother, 1 Kings ii. 17. It may be said, perhaps, that Adonijah was at this time aspiring at the throne, which Solomon perceiving

that it highly incensed him, as he had ever been a zealous adherent to the cause and interest of king Saul and his family.

Upon this provocation Abner meditated revenge, determining to transfer the crown from Ishbosheth to David, and thereby make it generally known that Ishbosheth was not advanced to the government for any virtue or ability of his own, but wholly by the advice, arms, interest, recommendation, and tried fidelity to himself.

He sent a commission to Hebron, with full power to make a league with David in his name, upon this condition, that from and after the time of Abner's drawing off all the tribes from Ishbosheth to David and advancing him to the throne by the universal consent of the people, Abner should be received as David's first minister and favourite.

Nothing could have been more welcometo David than this proposal, and it was accordingly accepted. The first thing he desired, as the earnest of a future alliance, was the restoring Michal,* whom he had purchased with very great labour and hazard, in obtaining the heads of two hundred Philistines, a bargain for her of Saul.

Abner therefore took Michal out of the arms of Phaltiel, upon whom she was bestowed, and then called the principals of the people, both military and civil, together, and addressed them to this purpose:

"There was a time when you would have gone over from Ishbosheth to David, and I was against it; but you are now at liberty to do what you please; for the prophet Samuel hath most infallibly assured us, from the voice of God himself, that David is the man whom divine Providence hath designed as king and governor of the Israelites; and that it is he, and only he, that is to avenge us upon the Philistines and to bring them under our yoke."

These words were so clear a discovery of Abner's design, that the heads of the people and of the army fell in unanimously with his opinion; and from that time forward declared and acted openly in favour of David. When they had proceeded thus far, Abner called for the Benjamites, on whom alone the protection of Ishbosheth depended, and delivered himself to them in the same manner, and with the same effect as he had done the other tribes, for they all declared themselves as one man for David.

When Abner had thus advanced toward the performance of his conditions, he took about twenty chosen men with him to David, in order, partly to ratify the treaty, and partly for common satisfaction, as people rather prefer being present at treaties in which they are concerned, than having them transacted by proxy, that the proceedings on both sides might be the more impartially transmitted from the one to the other, and an exact report made of what passed between himself and the heads of the tribes, and how he had now brought over the Benjamites to David's party.

Abner and his company were treated by David with freedom and magnificence, for the time they staid; but after some few days, he desired, for the present, to be dismissed, that he might conduct the army and the people to him; and upon

took occasion from this his request to fall out with him, and prevent it. But, however this may be, a general rule it was, not among the Jews only, but among other nations, that no private person should presume to marry the king's widow; for this made him appear as a rival and competitor for the crown.—Calmet's Commentary.

^{*} If David had divorced Michal, and she had in consequence been married to another, he must not have received her again: but the separation was violent on both sides. It is probable that her marriage to Phaltiel was a force upon her inclinations: and Phaltiel was very criminal in taking another man's wife, whatever affection he had for her. David required Michal to be restored, perhaps out of affection for her; or to strengthen his interest by asserting his affinity with the house of Saul, and showing the value that he put upon it; or to show his regard for the law of God, and to rebuke a man who openly violated it. As Abner did not deem it politic, at that juncture, directly to take Michal from Phaltiel, David addressed himself to Ishbosheth, whose sister she was, who complied with his demand; perhaps being willing to be upon amicable terms with him, as he could not overcome him by arms. - Scott.

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delivering up the government into his hands, by the consent of the whole nation, fulfil his design.

Abner was presently despatched according to his desire, and hardly got out of one of the gates of Hebron, before Joab, David's general, who had been somewhere abroad, came in at another; being given to understand that Abner had been in private with David, upon certain proposals to settle him in the government, the conditions offered and accepted, and that a league had been solemnly ratified betwixt them; strong prepossessions entered into Joab's head, that this intrigue of Abner's would be his ruin, and supplant him not only in his master's favour, but in the most honourable of his commissions; especially considering that Abner was a man of policy and address, and one who well knew how to improve a critical juncture to his own advantage.

To vent his spleen against Abner, Joab endeavoured to persuade the king, by artful insinuations, that he should do well to beware how he trusted Abner; for his main intent was to establish the family of Saul in the government.

When Joab found that he could not work upon David by calumny and slander, to the prejudice of Abner, he bethought himself of a surer and shorter way, therefore, to sate his revenge, which was by taking away his life; he despatched messengers after him in David's name, to call him back again with all imaginable expedition, under a pretext of somewhat forgotten in his instructions that was very consider-

The messengers overtook him upon the way at a place called Sirah, about three miles from Hebron; and upon their delivering their message, Abner very innocently went back with them to the city, little thinking of the malicious intention of taking away his life. Upon his coming up to the walls of the town, Joab stood in the gate with a specious appearance of kindness and humanity, ready to receive

him; and, taking him aside as upon private business, surprised him, and plunged his sword into his bowels.

Thus was this brave man taken off by the perfidious malice and treachery of Joab, in revenge (as he pretended) for the death of his brother Asahel, who was slain in the battle of Hebron, upon the violent pursuit of Abner; but in truth, to gratify his jealousy and revenge, for fear of being supplanted in his court-preferments.*

David was so excessively affected with the news of Abner's death, that, stretching forth his right hand toward heaven, in an appeal and protestation that he was neither privy nor consenting to the fact, cursing most bitterly the assassin, whoever he was, his family, and all his accomplices: and this he did not only in detestation of so base a practice, but as a proof that he had acted on the strictest niceties of faith and honour to Abner.

He appointed by proclamation a public mourning for him, with all the solemnities of tearing garments, and putting on sackcloth, he himself with his great ministers and officers assisting at the funeral, and giving sufficient demonstration, by wringing of hands, beating their breasts, and other expressions of sorrow, both of the veneration they had for Abner's memory. and their sense of so inestimable a loss: and this conduct fully convinced the people, that David was far from approving or consenting to so execrable an act.

^{*} This instance is sufficient to convince us, that men abandoned to the lusts of avarice and ambition will stick at nothing, for they are never at ease. So long as they are in the pursuit of what they eagerly desire, they press their ends, without ever examining or considering the means. is no such thing as a scruple of honour or conscience in the case; and they are still bolder in the defence and maintenance of a thing ill gotten, than they were in the acquiring of it; for they can better bear a miscarriage in missing what they would have been at, than the shame of having any thing forced away from them that they have acquired. They will, in short, struggle harder to keep what they have, especially when they have tasted the sweet of it, than to get what they had not. But here is enough in a word upon this point.

He caused the body to be interred at heightened the character of David's piety Hebron with great state and magnificence, and composed an epitaph himself to the honour of the deceased. He was the chief mourner, and a president to all the rest, who acted in conformity to his example. The death of Abner, in short, afflicted him to such a degree, that his friends could not prevail upon him to touch either meat or drink that whole day.* This religious strictness gained exceedingly upon the affections of the people, and particularly upon the friends of Abner, to whom nothing could be more acceptable than this last testimony of David's veneration and esteem for his person and memory, being eye-witnesses that he did not treat him, in a slight and ignominious way, as an enemy, but with all the tokens of generosity, justice, and friendship. Besides, it

and benevolence, in giving men to understand what they might expect from him themselves, if Abner's case should ever be theirs. David likewise, in this proceeding, consulted his interest as well as his reputation and virtue; for afterwards he was never suspected of the least want of good-will towards Abner.

When the assembly were on the point of breaking up, David addressed them in a manner which did honour to the memory of the deceased general, representing to them first his own particular unhappiness, in being deprived of so valuable a friend; and then how much the whole nation suffered in the loss of so brave and so wise a man; and, in short, a person so necessary both for war and counsel.

He then assured them that God, who judged rightly, would not let this murder pass unrevenged; adding this solemn declaration: "He is my witness, that I am not in condition to call Joab and Abishai to an account; for they have a greater interest in the army perhaps than I myself; but this I dare pronounce, that sooner or later, Divine justice will find them out."

The extraordinary fate of the unfortunate Abner greatly affected Ishbosheth, who had thereby sustained the loss of a most intimate friend, able counsellor, expert general, in short, one who had been principally accessary to his advancement to the throne, and continuance on it. He did not indeed long survive him, for he was treacherously murdered soon afterward by Baanah and Rechab; + the sons of Rimmon.

^{*} The funeral obsequies of an oriental were concluded by a feast, according with the rank and wealth of surviving relations. Chardin was present at many of those funeral banquets among the Armenian Christians in Persia. To this custom the prophet Jeremiah refers in ch. vi. 7. 8: "Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them, for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink, for their sister or for their mother. Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting to sit with them to eat and to drink." In the seventh verse the prophet speaks of provisions which relations and acquaintances usually sent to the house of their departed friend; and of those healths which were drunk to the survivors of the family. In Barbary, when a person dies, the neighbours, relations, and friends sent bread to the house of mourning, which the prophet Ezekiel calls "the bread of men." It was supposed the family were so depressed by the loss of their relation, as to be unable to think of their necessary food. Those who sent the provisions made a visit to their sorrowful and bereaved friends after the funeral, to comfort them and assist at the entertainment, which was given in honour of the dead. In allusion to this custom, the prophet Jeremiah received this charge: "Thus saith the Lord, enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament, nor bemoan them; for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the Lord," When all the people, therefore, came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, after the funeral of Abner, it was in strict compliance with the general custom of the country.

The same observation applies to the circumstance
mentioned in the gospel of John, that "many of
the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them."-Script. Illust.

⁺ These regicides are called the children of Ben jamin, and captains of bands; and therefore, as they were not only of Saul's tribe, but officers in his son's army, they had the greater obligation to be honest and faithful to the family of Saul; for there is great reason to imagine, that Saul, who lived in the borders of Benjamin, conferred more favours on that tribe, than on any of the rest, and might therefore expect a greater fidelity and esteem from them than the others. The distinguishing these men, therefore, by their tribe, as well as by their names, was highly proper and necessary, to 2 N

These two brothers were Benjamites, of the first rank; who, thinking that if Ishbosheth were but taken out of the way, David would be clear of all competitors, concerted the matter betwixt them how they might effect this purpose; making no manner of doubt but honours and commands in abundance would be conferred upon them as rewards for the performance of so good an office.

At a time, therefore, when he was alone in his bed-chamber, taking his afternoon's repose, no guards at hand, and the very servant that commonly kept the door wearied and fast asleep, they took their opportunity to steal into the chamber, (and having killed him in his sleep,) where they found him, cut off his head, and posted away with it all night toward Hebron,* in order to avoid the public resentment of the people, and to bring the present so much the fresher to him whom they pretended to oblige.

When they came to their journey's end, they presented it to David, not a little valuing themselves upon the merit of hav-

show what vile ungrateful villains they were, and how justly they deserved the severe and exemplary punishment which David inflicted upon them.

These two brothers were Benjamites, the first rank; who, thinking that if hosheth were but taken out of the way, avid would be clear of all competitors, neerted the matter betwixt them how of David will sufficiently show:

BOOK IV

"Wicked wretches that you are! prepare yourselves immediately to receive the just reward of your villany. Do not you know that I punished the murderer of Saul according to his demerit; who, when he had taken away that sacred life, had the confidence to bring me his golden crown for an ostentation of the service he had done me in it? Nay, though it was at the instance too of Saul himself that he did it, to prevent the indignity of being taken alive by his enemies. Am not I the same man, do you think, at this day, that I was then? or am I turned so abandoned a wretch since as to countenance the most profligate of men and of actions, and to reckon myself under an obligation to you for dipping your hands (upon my account, as you would have it thought,) in the blood of your lord? The slaying in his bed too, a person so just, and so generous a patron and benefactor to you. that all the advantages you can pretend to in this world, are but what you stand indebted for to his bounty and goodness; wherefore you shall pay for your breach of faith to your master, and for the scandal you would have cast upon me; for what greater wound could any man give me in my reputation, than to suppose me a person that could take pleasure in the tidings, or give countenance to the committing of so barbarous and inhuman a murder?"

Having thus remonstrated and reprimanded them for the commission of so horrid a crime, in order to impress the minds of others with a due sense of the same, and prevent it for the future, David commanded some of his guards to slay the two guilty persons, and afterwards he caused the head of Ishbosheth to be laid in the monument of Abner, with due form and solemnity.

[.] The sacred historian informs us, that 'the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon; and they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat, and they smote him under the fifth rib; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped." It is still a custom in the East, according to Dr Perry, to allow their soldiers a certain quantity of corn, with other articles of provisions, together with some pay: and as it was the custom also to carry their corn to the mill at break of day, these two captains very naturally went to the palace the day before, to fetch wheat, in order to distribute it to the soldiers, that it might be sent to the mill at the accustomed hour in the morning. The princes of the East, in those days, as the history of David shows, lounged in their divan, or reposed on their couch, till the cool of the evening began to advance. Rechab and Baanah therefore, came in the heat of the day, when they knew that Ishbosheth their master would be resting on his bed; and as it was necessary, for the reason just given, to have the corn the day before it was needed, their coming at that time, though it might be a little earlier than usual, created no suspicion, and attracted no notice.-Paxton.

When David's orders were executed, all the elders and chief officers of state approach him, in order to recognise his regal authority, and lay their lives and fortunes at his feet, assuring him of the zeal and devotion they ever had for him, even in the life of Saul, and when they had the honour to serve under his command; and farther observing how the prophet Samuel, according to God's order and appointment, had declared him king, and that the government would descend to his sons after him; foretelling that the great work of subduing the Philistines was reserved for him alone, and consequently the settling of Israel in the possession of a lasting peace and safety.

David highly commended them for their good-will and disposition, encouraging them to go on as they had begun, with an assurance, that he, for his part, would never give them cause to repent it. David accompanied this declaration with a splendid treat; and when he had entertained them with all humanity and freedom, he sent them away with a summons to the whole body of the people to meet at his palace.

Pursuant to this general summons there assembled of the tribe of Judah, six thousand and eight hundred men, armed with shields and lances. These had been hitherto of the party of Saul, over and above those of the same tribe, who had made David king by themselves. Of the tribe of Simeon, seven thousand and one hundred, and upwards. Of the tribe of Levi, four thousand seven hundred, with their leader Jehoida, and with these was the high-priest Zadok, with two and twenty eminent men of his relations. Of the tribe of Benjamin, three thousand armed men; though this tribe was altogether of opinion that some of Saul's family would succeed to the government. Of the tribe of Ephraim, twenty thousand and eight hundred, strong men, and of great courage. Of the tribe of Manasseh, eighteen thousand. Of the tribe of Issa-

char, two hundred cunning men, who could foretell things to come, beside twenty thousand in arms. Of the tribe of Zebulun, fifty thousand choice men, and well armed: this tribe came over to David in general. All these used the same armour as the tribe of Gad. Of Naphtali, a thousand eminent commanders, armed with shield and spear, with almost an innumerable multitude of their followers. Of the tribe of Dan, twenty-eight thousand choice men. Of the tribe of Asher, forty thousand; and of the two tribes beyond Jordan, and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh, that were armed with shield, spear, sword and helmet, an hundred and twenty thousand.

This is the muster-roll of those who came up to David at Hebron, and brought corn, wine, and other necessary provisions with them in abundance, and with one voice proclaimed him their king.

When they had spent three days there in feasting, David marched out at the head of this army to Jerusalem.

The Jebusites, a people of the race of the Canaanites, were at that time in possession of the city; and upon David's advance toward them, they shut their gates, and in a way of defiance to David and his troops, brought out their lame and their blind * to the walls for the defence of the town.

[.] The blind and the lame, says Luther upon this place, were the idols of the Jebusites, which, to irritate David they set upon their walls, as their patrons and protectors; and these they call blind and lame sarcastically, and with respect to David's opinion; as if they had said, "These gods of ours, whom ye Israelites reproach as blind and lame, and so unable to direct or defend us, will secure us against you, and, to your cost, make you find, that they are neither blind nor lame, but have eyes to watch for us, and hands to fight against you, so that you must conquer and subdue them, before you take this place." But this interpretation seems to be a little too metaphorical and forced, for which reason we have rather chosen the construction which Josephus, lib. vii. c. 2. puts upon this passage, viz. that they imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that by way of contempt, they told David, that their very blind and lame would be able to defend it against him and all his forces: and this is a seuse so extremely plain and

David was so incensed at this contemptuous mockery, that he resolved immediately to attack the city; reasonably judging, that if he made an example of the people of this place, it would strike a terror into all others for the future. Accordingly he advanced with the flower of his army, and, upon a general assault, entered the lower town: but the castle still made an obstinate resistance. David finding it to be a strong place, the attempt hazardous, and his honour at stake upon the carrying of it, bethought himself of a means to inflame the courage of his men by some extraordinary proposal of honour and reward; and by that incentive to kindle an emulation among them.

To effect this, he passed his royal word, that he who first mounted the wall, and made good his station, should have the command of the army. Stimulated by the mighty promise the Israelites joined in a fierce attack, and a generous contention arose who should merit that honour.

At length Joab mounted the wall and carried the prize; so that he called upon the king from the top of the battlement to fulfil his promise.

Having expelled the enemy from the castle, and repaired the town, the king gave to Jerusalem the name of the city of David, and made it his place of residence during his reign.*

obvious, that the renowned Bochart wonders, why any man of learning should seek for any other. The only exception to it is, that these blind and lame, which were rather objects of compassion, are said to have been extremely hated by David. But we may observe, that David here retorts the sarcasm upon them; 'the lame and blind,' i. e. those who are set to defend the place, and who, as they pretended, were to be only the lame and the blind. And these were hateful to David, because they had wickedly and insolently defied the armies of the living God.—Poole's Annotations, Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

* During the reigns of David and Solomon, Jerusalem was the metropolis of the land of Israel; but, after the defection of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, it was the capital of the kings of Judah, during whose government it underwent various revolutions. It was captured four times without being demolished, viz. by Shishak, sovereign of Egypt, from whose ravages it never recovered its

This memorable transaction happened after he had ruled seven years and six months over the tribe of Judah in Hebron.

Upon the establishment of his court at

former splendour; by Antiochus Epiphanes, who treated the Jews with singular barbarity; by Pompey the Great, who rendered the Jews tributary to Rome; and by Herod, with the assistance of a Roman force under Sosius. It was first entirely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and again by the emperor Titus, the repeated insurrections of the turbulent Jews having filled up the measure of their iniquities, and drawn down upon them the implacable vengeance of the Romans. Titus ineffectually endeavoured to save the temple; it was involved in the same ruin with the rest of the city. and, after it had been reduced to ashes, the foundations of that sacred edifice were ploughed up by the Roman soldiers. Thus literally was fulfilled the prediction of our Lord, that not one stone should be left upon another that should not be thrown down. On his return to Rome, Titus was honoured with a triumph, and to commemorate his conquest of Judea, a triumphal arch was erected, which is still in existence. Numerous medals of Judea vanquished were struck in honour of the same event. The emperor Adrian erected a city on part of the former site of Jerusalem, which he called Ælia Capitolina: it was afterwards greatly enlarged and beautified by Constantine the Great, who restored its ancient name. During that emperor's reign the Jews made various efforts to rebuild their temple; which, however, were always frustrated: nor did better success attend the attempt made A. v. 363, by the apostate emperor Julian. An earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, compelled the workmen to abandon their design. From the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans to the present time, that city has remained, for the most part, in a state of ruin and desolation; and has never been under the government of the Jews themselves, but oppressed and broken down by a succession of foreign masters,—the Romans, the Saracens, the Franks, the Mamelukes, and last by the Turks, to whom it is still subject. It is not, therefore, only in the history of Josephus, and in other ancient writers, that we are to look for the accomplishment of our Lord's predictions: -we see them verified at this moment before our eyes, in the desolate state of the once celebrated city and temple of Jerusalem, and in the present condition of the Jewish people, not collected to-gether into any one country, into one political society, and under one form of government, but dispersed over every region of the globe, and every where treated with contumely and scorn. modern city of Jerusalem contains within its walls several of the hills on which the ancient city is supposed to have stood; but these are only perceptible by the ascent and descent of the streets. When seen from the mount of Olives, on the other side of the valley of Jehoshaphat, it presents an inclined plane, descending from west to east. An embattled wall, fortified with towers and a Gothic castle, encompasses the city all round, excluding however, part of mount Sion, which it formerly

Jerusalem, success attended his affairs every day more and more; for God in his providence designing it for a seat of glory, had a peculiar kindness for the place.

enclosed. Notwithstanding its seemingly strong position, it is incapable of sustaining a severe assault; because, on account of the topography of the land, it has no means of preventing the approaches of an enemy; and, on the other hand, it is commanded, at the distance of a gun-shot, by the Djebel Tor, or the mount of Olives, from which it is seen to the best advantage. Imposing, however, as the appearance of Jerusalem is, when viewed from that mountain,-and exhibiting a compactness of structure like that alluded to by the Psalmist, (cxxii. 3.) the illusion vanishes on entering the town. No 'streets of palaces and walks of state,'-no highraised arches of triumph-no fountains to cool the air, or porticoes—not a single vestige meets the traveller, to announce its former military greatness or commercial opulence: but in the place of these, he finds himself encompassed by walls of rude masonry, the dull uniformity of which is only broken by the occasional protrusion of a small grated window. All the streets are wretchedness, and the houses of the Jews, more especially, are as dunghills. 'From the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed.' The finest section of the city is that inhabited by the Armenians; in the other quarters, the streets are much narrower, being scarcely wide enough to admit three camels to stand abreast. In the western quarter and in the centre of Jerusalem, towards Calvary, the low and ill-built houses, which have flat terraces or domes on the top, but no chimneys or windows, stand very close together; but in the eastern part, along the brook Kedron, the eye perceives vacant spaces, and amongst the rest that which surrounds the mosque erected by the Khalif Omar, A. D. 637, on the site of the temple, and the nearly deserted spot where once stood the tower of Antonia and the second palace of Herod.—Horne.

Dr Richardson's account of the present condition of the Jews of Jerusalem is as follows :-"Many of the Jews are rich and in comfortable circumstances, and possess a good deal of property in Jerusalem; but they are careful to conceal their wealth, and even their comfort, from the jealous eye of their rulers, lest, by awaking their cupidity, some vile, indefensible plot should be devised to their prejudice. In going to visit a respectable Jew in the holy city, it is a common thing to pass to his house over a ruined foreground and up an awkward outside stair, constructed of rough unpolished stones, that totter under the foot; but it improves as you ascend, and at the top has a respectable appearance, as it ends in an agreeable platform in front of the house. On entering the house itself it is found to be clean and well furnished; the sofas are covered with Persian carpets, and the people seem happy to receive you. The visitor is entertained with coffee and tobacco. as is the custom in the houses of the Turks and Christians. The ladies presented themselves with an ease and address that surprised me, and recalled to my memory the pleasing society of Europe.

Hiram king of Tyre, awed by the great success of David, sent an embassy, upon a treaty of friendship and alliance, with presents likewise of cedar wood, builders, and

This difference of manner arises from many of the Jewish families in Jerusalem having resided in Spain or Portugal, when the females had rid themselves of the cruel domestic fetters of the East, and, on returning to their beloved land, had very properly maintained their justly acquired freedom and rank in society. They almost all speak a broken Italian, so that conversation goes on without the clumsy aid of an interpreter. It was the feast of the passover, and they were all eating unleavened bread, some of which was presented to me as a curiosity, and I partook of it merely that I might have the gratification of eating unleavened bread with the sons and daughters of Jacob in Jerusalem; it is very insipid fare, and no one would eat it from choice. For the same reason I went to the synagogue, of which there are two in Jerusalem, although I visited only one. The form of worship is the same as in this country, and, I believe, in every country which the Jews inhabit. The females have a separate part of the synagogue assigned to them, as in the synagogues in Europe, and in the Christian churches all over the Levant. They are not, however, expected to be frequent or regular in their attendance on public worship. The ladies generally make a point of going on the Sunday, that is, the Friday night or Saturday morning, after they are married; and being thus introduced in their new capacity, once a year is considered as sufficient compliance, on their part, with the ancient injunction to assemble themselves together in the house of prayer. Like the votaries of some Christian establishments, the Jewesses trust more to the prayers of their priests than to their own. The synagogues in Jerusalem are both poor and small, not owing to the poverty of their possessors, but to the prudential motives above-mentioned. The Jewesses in Jerusalem speak in a decided and firm tone, unlike the hesitating and timid voice of the Arab and Turkish females; and claim the European privilege of differing from their husbands, and maintaining their own opinions. They are fair and good-looking: red and auburn hair are by no means uncommon in either of the sexes. I never saw any of them with veils; and was informed that it is the general practice of the Jewesses in Jerusalem to go with their faces uncovered; they are the only females there who do so. Generally speaking, I think they are disposed to be rather of a plethoric habit : and the admirers of size and softness in the fair sex, will find as regularly well-built fatties, with double mouldings in the neck and chin, among the fair daughters of Jerusalem, as among the fairer daughters of England. They seem particularly liable to eruptive diseases; and the want of children is as great a heart-break to them now as it was in the days of Sarah. In passing up to the synagogue, I was particularly struck with the mean and wretched appearance of the houses on both sides of the streets, as well as with the poverty of their inhabimaster-workmen toward the erecting of a deserved singularly well from David himpalace for him at Jerusalem. self. This man, therefore, upon the sack-

David fortified the upper town, and laid that and the citadel both in one, with a wall about them, and gave the command of it to Joab. He was the first who changed the name of it, and it was after the casting out of the Jebusites: for in the days of Abraham, it was called Salem; and some will have it that Homer pointed at this city, when he speaks of the people of Solyma; for the word Hieron, or temple, in the Hebrew signifies security or a fortress.

Now the whole time of the war with the Philistines, from the Israelites dividing their lands, under the command of Joshua, to the day here spoken of, was reckoned to be five hundred and fifteen years; but the barbarians kept the possession of Jerusalem all along, till they were driven out by David.

Now there was among the Jebusites a very rich man, one Ornan, who had done many good offices for the Israelites, and

tants. Some of the old men and old women had more withered and hungry aspects than any of our race I ever saw, with the exception of the caverned dames at Gornou in Egyptian Thebes, who might have sat in a stony field as a picture of famine the year after the flood. The sight of a poor Jew in Jerusalem has in it something peculiarly affecting. The heart of this wonderful people, in whatever clime they roam, still turns to it as the city of their promised rest. They take pleasure in her ruins, and would lick the very dust for her sake. Jerusalem is the centre around which the exiled sons of Judah build, in airy dreams, the mansions of their future greatness. In whatever part of the world he may live, the heart's desire of a Jew, when gathered to his fathers, is to be buried in Jerusalem. Thither they return from Spain and Portugal, from Egypt and Barbary, and other countries among which they have been scattered; and when, after all their longings, and all their struggles up the steeps of life, we see them poor, and blind, and naked, in the streets of their once happy Zion, he must have a cold heart that can remain untouched by their sufferings, without uttering a prayer that the light of a reconciled countenance would shine on the darkness of Judah, and the day-star of Bethlehem arise in their hearts. The Jews are the best cicerones in Jerusalem, because they generally give the ancient names of places, which the guides and interpreters belonging to the different convents do not. They are not forward in presenting themselves, and must generally be sought for.

deserved singularly well from David himself. This man, therefore, upon the sacking of the town, was preserved by the king from the heat and fury of the sol diers, after his settlement at Jerusalem.

David took several wives, besides concubines, more than he had done before; by whom he had eleven children, Shanmuah, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, Eliphalet, and a daughter named Thamar, who was the sister of Absalom. Nine of the sons were lawfully begotten, but the two last by concubines.

The Philistines, ever avowed enemies to the Israelites, no sooner heard that David was acknowledged as king by the tribes in general, than they mustered their forces, and encamped in a place called the Valley of the Giants,* not far from Jerusalem.

Upon this occasion, David, who would do nothing without counsel and direction from above, appointed the high-priest to inform himself in the way that God had prescribed, what might be the event of this battle.

Having received an encouraging answer, he immediately advanced against the foe, and fell upon them in surprise, and charged them with such vehemence, that a total defeat soon ensued, with great slaughter on the side of the Philistines.

This was a signal victory obtained without much opposition, but it must not therefore be inferred that the army of the Philistines was inconsiderable in point of numbers, or the valour of their men, for Syria and Phœnicia, and several other warlike nations, were all engaged in the confeder-

^{*} The valley of the Rephaim (or the Giants' Valley) was so called from its gigantic inhabitants; it was situated on the confines of the territories allotted to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. It was memorable, as oftentimes being the field f battle between the Philistines and the Jews under David and his successors. This valley also appears to have been distinguished for its abundant harvests. Like all the country about Jerusalem, it is now stony, and scantily furnished with patches of light red soil.—Horne.

acy. It had been otherwise, if after so many defeats, and the loss of so many thousands, they could never have brought an army into the field again; and we find, that immediately after this defeat, they invaded the Israelites with thrice the number they had before, and had the confidence to post themselves in the very same place again.

The king, after his constant custom, consulted the oracle as formerly, and received orders to lie still with his army in a certain wood, called the Grove of Mourning, or the mulberry-trees,* not far from the enemy; and not to move from thence, or make any attempt upon any occasion whatsoever, till he found the branches of the trees in an agitation, as of their own accord, and without a breath of air stirring to cause that motion.

David punctually obeyed the Divine command; and as soon as the providential sign was given him, he advanced, as to a certain and predetermined victory. The Philistines gave way on the very first attack, but when they came to close fight, they ran with the Israelites at their backs, and their swords in their reins.

They were pursued with great slaughter to Gazer, a town situated upon the borders of either party. They then pillaged the camp, where they made themselves masters of a prodigious booty, with little trouble or hazard, seizing their idols among other things, and breaking them to pieces.

This war being speedily and happily finished, the king was pleased, by the advice and assent of his great council, to draw together the whole force he could raise out of all the tribes under his jurisdiction, together with the priests and Levites; and to march with this great body directly to Kirjath-jearim, and bring the ark of God from thence to Jerusalem, that being the place designed for holy worship, and for the celebration of all sacrifices, ceremonies, and religious rites for the time to come.

The tribes being met according to appointment, and all things in readiness for the removal of the ark (David himself also assisting at the solemnity) the priests took it out of the house of Abinadab, and laying it upon a new waggon, with oxen to draw it, left the ark in charge with their children and relations. The king himself went foremost; and was followed by a multitude of people, glorifying God in sacred hymns and psalms.

And thus was the ark conducted towards Jerusalem, after the fashion of the country; dancing as they went to the sound of harps, cymbals, and other musical-instruments.;

^{*} God indeed is left to his own pleasure what signs he shall think fit to give his people, upon any occasion for their good; but the more arbitrary and uncommon any sign is, the more it seems to have proceeded from God. Though, therefore, the sound of people's going upon the tops of trees, be a thing not so congruous to our conceptions, yet it does not from hence follow that it was not the real sign which God gave David, because the stranger the phenomenon was, the greater assurance is conveyed of the divine interposition in his favour.

[†] It is supposed by some, that this bringing back of the ark was appointed to be on one of the three great festivals; and the reason, why David might summon so many of his principal ministers and officers to accompany him in the expedition, might be, to possess the young people, who perhaps had heard little or nothing of the ark, by reason of its having been absent so long, with a mighty veneration for it, when they saw the king, and so many of the chief nobility waiting on it, with such a variety of music, and such public declarations of joy.—Millar's History of the Church.

‡ Strabo tells us, that it was customary among the Greeks, as well as other nations, to use music

[‡] Strabo tells us, that it was customary among the Greeks, as well as other nations, to use music and dancing in religious processions; and Lucian expressly says, that among the ancients, no ceremonial of religion, no expiation, no atonement was accounted rightly accomplished without dancing. So that David was far from being singular in his behaviour upon this occasion; nor was behaviour in this particular any disparagement to his regal dignity. His dancing, that is, his moving in certain serious and solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, was an exercise highly conducive to the purpose of piety, and his mixing with the public festivities of his people, was a condescension (as Tacitus relates of Augustus the Roman emperor) not unbecoming the greatest monarch. Policy taught Augustus to put himself upon a level with his subjects, in their public rejoicings; piety taught David, that all men are upon a level in the solemnities of religion

As they were upon the way, at a certain place called the thrashing-floor of Nachon, the oxen staggering with the ark, Uzzah put forth his hand to keep it from overturning, and was immediately struck dead by divine vengeance for presuming to touch it, as he was not in holy orders.*

This exemplary death of Uzzah was a great affliction to David himself, and to all the people; and they called the place Perez-uzzah, or 'The breach of Uzzah;' which name it bore many hundred years. David was so affected with the awful judgment inflicted on Uzzah, that, lest it might peradventure be his case, if he should receive the ark into the city, (his fault being only the temerity of touching it,) he suspended the carrying of it to Jerusalem, and turned off with it upon the way, into the house of a certain good man and a Levite, whose name was Obed-edom, and there it lay deposited for three whole

So that David was not singular in his behaviour upon this occasion.—Patrick's Commentary, and

that every thing prospered in the family, and that the master of it grew rich to admiration.

It was generally observed, how amazingly Obed-edom was improved in his

months, in which time it was observed

It was generally observed, how amazingly Obed-edom was improved in his fortune since he had the ark under his roof, and that of a very poor man, he became on a sudden considerable for wealth, and in so good a condition, that he was the wonder as well as the envy of his neighbours.

The rumour of Obed-edom's success reaching the king's ear, greatly encouraged him, insomuch that, fearless of danger, he resumed his former purpose of transporting it to Jerusalem, which was done after this manner.

The priests had the charge of carrying it, and seven choirs of singing men, according to the king's appointment, marching before it, David himself bearing his part in the concert, with dancing and singing to his harp: this his wife Michal—the daughter of the late king Saul—utterly disliked, as an action of too much levity, and below the dignity of David's character.

The ark being brought to the city, it was disposed of in the tabernacle, + which

saints; but his 'counsels are a great deep, and his

judgments,' though always just, 'are past finding

The History of the Life of King David.

* What shall we say to the fate of Uzzah? or what probable cause can be assigned for his sudden and untimely end? are questions which naturally arise on reading this passage; but he seems to have been guilty of a treble transgression of the divine will. The ark, as some say, was by his direction placed in a cart, though it ought to have been carried by staves upon the shoulders of the Levites; he, without any proper designation, adventures to attend it, for there is no proof in scripture that he was a Levite; and when he thought it in danger of falling, officiously put forth his hand and laid hold on it, which was forbidden on pain of death. And when we consider further, that the ark had continued so long in obscurity, that the people had in a manner lost all sense of a divine power residing in it, we have no less reason to wonder, that God, being disposed to retrieve the ancient honour of that sacred vessel and to curb the heinous profanations of it for the future, should single out one, the most culpable of many; one, who in three instances was then violating his commands, to be a monument of his displeasure against a wilful ignorance, or a rude contempt of his precept; that by such an example he might inspire both priests and people with a sacred dread of his majesty, and a profound veneration for his mysteries. Happy were it for us, however, if we could account for the operations of God with the same facility that we can for the actions of his

[†] The future history of this sacred ark is this: after the building of the temple at Jerusalem, Solomon had it removed from Sion into a proper place that was consecrated for it, where it remained with all suitable respect till the times of the latter kings of Judah, who gave themselves up to idolatry, and were not afraid to put the images of their gods in the holy place itself. Hereupon the priests, being unable to endure this profanation, took the ark, and carried it from place to place, that by this means it might escape the fury of these impious princes: but Josiah, who was a good man, and restored the true worship of God, commanded them to bring it back to the sanctuary, and forbade them to carry it into the country, as they had done. The Talmudists, however, have a tradition that Solomon, having learned by revelation that the Assyrians would one day burn the temple which he had lately built, and carry away all the rich materials which he had placed there, took care to have a private hole made under ground, where, in case of necessity, he might conceal the most valuable things belonging to it from the knowledge of any enemies; and that Josiah, having a foresight of the calamities which were

David had made on purpose for it. Upon father, and all other pretenders; and that the occasion of this festival, there were sacrifices and peace-offerings in abundance, and sufficient for the whole multitude: for there was not a man, woman, or child there, who had not a cake, and a part of the flesh of the sacrifice given them; and when they had eaten plentifully, David returned to his palace.

He was met on the way by his wife Michal, who uttered many sincere wishes for his success; but still reproved him for dancing, as unlike a king, and also for uncovering himself in the eyes of his handmaids and servants.*

David told her that he was not ashamed of doing any thing that he knew was acceptable to that God who advanced him to the throne of Israel, in preference to her

coming upon the Jewish nation, here hid the ark of the covenant, together with Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, the high priest's pectoral, and the holy oil; but that, during the Babylonish captivity, the priests having lost all knowledge of the place where these things were concealed, they were never seen more, and were not in the second

temple .- Calmet.

* The words of Michal, wherein she upbraids David, are these :- 'How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!' 2 Sam. vi. 20. At first reading, they seem to intimate, that David, in his dancing, had exposed his naked body, and acted, some way or other, immodestly: but these words, we are to consider, were spoken in a fit of passion, and when Michal was minded to aggravate matters; for it is not to be doubted, but that David kept himself within the bounds of modesty, how joyous soever he might be. It was a command which God gave the Israelites, that they should rejoice in their feasts, Deut. xii. 7. but then, their joy was not to be lascivious or petulant, but pious and moderate. In the case before us, David was in the more immediate presence of God, and about a very sacred business; and therefore it is incongruous to think that he would commit any thing immodest; and that he could not expose his nakedness (as his wife would insinuate) is evident from his having, not only an ephod on, but being clothed with a robe of fine linen, besides his usual under-garments, 1 Chron. xv. 27. and therefore, though his putting off his regal robes might give some occasion to Michal's expression of his uncovering himself, yet it must be owned, that this opprobrious term proceeded from nothing but the overflowing spleen of a proud passionate woman .- Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.

he would sing and dance again and again, without regarding at all how either she or her handmaids took it. Michal had no children by David; but by her other husband, to whom Saul had given her in marriage, upon taking her away from David, she had five sons.+

David, encouraged by the frequent success with which God crowned all his undertakings, was so sensible of God's goodness towards him upon the daily success of whatever he took in hand, that he began to make it matter of conscience to live in a palace of cedar himself, that was as stately as art and ornament could make it, and at the same time to lodge the ark in the tabernacle; so that he resolved to erect and dedicate a temple to God's honour and worship; and according to the prediction of Moses, he communicated the design to the prophet Nathan; who, upon counsel and advice, encouraged him to proceed upon the work; for he might be sure of God's special favour and providence along with him. These words served more and more to animate and confirm David in his purpose and design.

In the night following, the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, "Go, and tell David, that I accept of his goodwill in being the first proposer of erecting a temple unto my service; yet as the necessity of his wars hath made him a man of blood, I cannot permit the doing of this work in his days; but let him know, that after a long and happy life, he shall

⁺ Michal is put in the text indeed, 2 Sam. xxi. 8. but not by mistake, as some will have it; for though Michal had no children of her own, yet those children which Merab her sister had by Adriel, Michal brought up; and the Jews observe, upon this occasion, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in scripture said to have begotten him. Nor is it in scripture only that this form of expression takes place, but in heathen authors likewise. For Agamemnon and Menelaus are called sons of Atreus, because Plisthenes (who was their father) being dead, he took care to bring them up.—Howell's History, in the notes, and Patrick's Commentary.

son and successor Solomon; whom I shall be as tender of as a father can be of his own child, and continue the government in the line of his family for ever;* or in case of his committing iniquity, I will only punish the transgression with bodily sickness or famine, not with a total rejection, as I did Saul."

The prophet, without any delay, acquitted himself of his commission; and it was so welcome a message to David, to be assured that the succession was secured to his posterity, and the honour of his family so graciously provided for, that he betook himself immediately to the ark of God, fell down upon his face, and offered this prayer and thanksgiving: Lord, thy holy name be praised for all thy benefits and mercies! Thou that hast taken thy servant from the sheepfold, and advanced him to this height of dignity and power! Lord, I bless thee for all this; for thy continued providences to myself, and the promises to my posterity: and for thy multiplied deliverances and protections to thine own people.'

David's late series of success induced him again to meditate hostilities against the Philistines, to which he was not a little encouraged by a prediction that he should overcome all his enemies, and leave his kingdom in peace to his successor.

In order to prosecute this war, he appointed a day and place for a rendezvous, summoned his troops together; and when he was in a condition to march, made an incursion into the enemy's country, overcame them in a pitched battle, took possession of a good part of their lands, and annexed them to the jurisdiction of the He made war with the Moab-Israelites.

commit the care of the undertaking to his | ites, destroyed two-thirds of their army. and took the rest, and made them tributaries.+

After which he overthrew Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, t whom he encountered not far from the Euphrates, and killed twenty thousand foot, and five thousand horse; taking also a thousand chariots, of which he reserved only an hundred for his own use, and burnt the

CHAPTER V.

David's success against the Syrians.-He shows peculiar tokens of favour towards Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, for his father's sake .- Wages war with the Ammonites .-Joab's victory over them .- The king of Syriu's

+ There is no small obscurity in the words of the text, which are these: 'He smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even in two lines measured he to put to death, and with one line to keep alive:' which words seem to allude to a custom among the kings of the East, when they were thoroughly incensed against any nation, namely, to make the captives all come together to one place, and prostrate themselves upon the ground; that being divided into two parts, as it were with a line, their conqueror might appoint which part he pleased, either for death or life, which was sometimes determined by casting of lots. Some are of opinion that David made three lots, or parts of these Moabites, two of which he ordered to be slain, and one part only to be kept alive. The reason of this his severity against these miserable people, the Rabbins assure us, was, because they had slain his parents and brethren, whom he had committed to the custody of the king of Moab during his exile. But of the reality of this motive, there is no manner of appearance; and since this execution, which David inflicted, may relate either to the whole nation, or the army only, to clear David from the imputation of too much cruelty, we should rather conceive it of the third, or half part at most of the army .- Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commen-

I Zobah seems to have been a part of Syria, to the north-east of Canaan, to the south of Damascus, and reaching to the river Euphrates. It is probable that Hadadezer was jealous of David's growing greatness, and came to assist the Moabites, in order to secure his own dominions; and that this gave David a fair opportunity of extending his conquests to the Euphrates. Some think, however, that David went to establish his dominion over all the countries as far as that river according to the grant made to Israel; and that he was opposed by Hadadezer.—Scott.

^{*} Though the words 'for ever' in their primary signification plainly relate to the continuance of David's family upon the throne of Israel, yet in a more extensive sense they are no obscure prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah; as the expression for ever, can only be applied to him who is the eternal Son of God, and of whose dominion there shall be no end.

total defeat .- Case of David and Bathshebs. - Tamar ravished by Amnon .- Absalom her brother takes away his life, in revenge for the injury done to his family.

THE king of Syria and Damascus* no sooner heard that David had proclaimed war against his friend and ally, the king of Zobah, than he despatched a very considerable body of forces in order to succour him, and remove, if possible, the seat of the war.

After several skirmishes, he came to a battle with David near Euphrates, t where

* Aram-damasek, which we translate 'Syria of Damascus,' was that part of Syria which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, whose chief city was Damascus, situate in a valley, called by several names in scripture, and watered by five rivers, the two principal of which, namely, Abana and Pharpar (mentioned in 2 Kings v. 12.) descended from mount Hermon; whereof the latter washed the walls of Damascus, and the other ran through it, and divided the city into two parts .- Patrick's

Commentary.

+ It has its source in the north-east mountains of Armenia. For a long way it directs its course to the west-ward; after which at the foot of mount Taurus, it bends its course south-ward, and having received the Melas, which flows into it from almost the north-west corner of Lesser Asia, it runs along the east side of Syria, and Arabia the Desert. It seems, that anciently a branch of the Euphrates turning eastward, fell into the Hiddekel or Tigris, at Seleucia. Between these branches, Nebuchadnezzar dug a large canal, called Nahar-malcah, or the royal river. At present, after having watered the provinces of Irak, or ancient Chaldea, and the province of Auxa, it runs with a gentle flow, towards the city of Ario, where the violent reflux of the Persian gulf obstructs its waters. About 30 miles farther south, it joins the Tigris, just above where the ancient paradise is supposed to have stood: about 60 miles farther south they discharge themselves into the Persian gulf, but whether by one or more streams, is not certainly known. This river is generally slow in its course, and yet it is not so navigable, even for small craft, as one might expect; but this is owing to the sloth of the people, who live near it, in not clearing the channel of stones, and suffering it in the flat country to part into so many streams, that sailors are often at a loss which to take. Its course is for the most part very pleasant, running through delightful plains, where its banks are decked with the constant verdure of willows, palm-trees, and rich pastures. The water is generally foul and muddy; but when settled or strained, is very wholesome, and by the Arabs reckoned a universal medicine. In passing through some deserts, it contracts a yellowish colour, and disagreeable taste; the first he lost the greater part of his army, twenty thousand being cut off, the rest saved themselves by flight.

Nicolaus mentions this same Adad, in the fourth book of his history, as follows: "A long time after, one Adad, a valiant man, and a native of the place, had the command of Damascus and Syria, Phœnicia only excepted. There happened to be a war betwixt this same Adad and David, the king of the Jews, and several battles fought between them; but in the end, Adad was overcome at the Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince, and a great captain." And the same author, treating further of his posterity, says, "That the government was handed down from father to son, to the tenth generation; the successor still received the father's name with the empire, as the Ptolemies among the Egyptians. The third in order from this Adad, and the greatest man of the family, out of a generous zeal to repair

deep nor wide, except when swelled by the annual melting of the Armenian snows. The Arabs divide this river into the greater and lesser: the greater, they say, falls into the Tigris, near the cities of Ambar and Felujah; and the lesser, which is often the largest stream, after forming the Nabathean fens, on the east of Arabia Deserta, discharges itself into the Tigris at Karnah. To prevent the yearly overflow of the adjacent country by the Tigris and Euphrates, it has been often attempted to divide their streams into a variety of lesser ones; but these attempts have not hitherto much answered the end. There are many towns on its banks, which are in general rather level than mountainous. The river does not appear to be of any very great breadth. Otter says, "when we passed the Euphrates, the 12th of March, this river had only 200 common paces in width; in its height, it extends 500 or 600 paces in to the plains on the right." Thevenot observes, that near to Bir, the Euphrates (July 3) seemed no larger than the Seine at Paris; but it was said to be very broad in winter. Near Hellah, which marks the situation of the ancient Babylon, it was about four hundred feet wide. Mr Rich, in his memoir on Babylon, says, the current was, at Hellah, at a medium, about two knots (miles) per hour. Euphrates now overflows the site of Babylon, where, says Sir R. K. Porter, "its banks were hoary with reeds, and the grey osier willows were yet there, on which the captives of Israel hung up of which distinguishes it, after it has run some their harps, and while Jerusalem was not, refused miles into the Persian gulf. This river is neither to be comforted."—Brown and Calmet.

the honour that his grandfather lost by this defeat, poured an army upon the Jews, and laid waste Samaria."

The historian was not mistaken in this part of his relation; for this is the Adad who invaded Samaria in the reign of Ahab king of Israel.

With this victorious army David overran Damascus and the rest of Syria; left garrisons behind him where he saw convenient; laid the country under contribution, and so returned home again; carrying with him to Jerusalem the golden quivers, and other rich equipage that were taken from Adad's guards; and dedicating the spoil and trophies to God, in acknowledgment of the victory he had obtained through his favour and protection.

All these valuable spoils and much more were afterwards taken by Shishak, the king of Egypt, upon the sacking of Jerusalem, in his war with Rehoboam, David's grandson.

During David's extraordinary success, through the blessing of the Almighty God upon his arms, he invaded Betah and Berothai, the two most considerable cities in the whole dominions of Hadadezer; both which he took by assault; with gold and silver, to an inestimable value; beside a great quantity of a sort of brass, esteemed of a greater value than even gold itself.

This was the metal that Solomon afterward made use of for his beautiful basons, and a huge vessel, called the sea, upon the finishing and adorning of the temple.

Toi, king of Hamath, alarmed and terrified at David's victory over the king of Syria, and thinking it most prudent to secure the interest and favour of so powerful and successful a prince, despatched his son Joram to him, with a compliment of congratulation for the victory gained over their common enemy (for so was Hadadezer reputed) with instructions to solicit a league of amity and fair understanding betwixt them; not forgetting several mag-

nificent presents of gold, silver, and brass, antique and curious, to the highest degree of excellency and perfection. David accepted both of the proposals and the presents, receiving and dismissing the ambassador, to the honour and satisfaction of both parties: but still dedicated to God all the spoils of gold and silver, and precious things, that were taken from the enemy, as to the cause of the victory. Nor was David successful only in his own personal adventures and undertakings, but God prospered him in all his commissions also, executed by deputies and lieutenants; as in the case of Abishai, Joab's brother, who engaged a great body of Edomites in the Valley of Salt;* and by God's assistance not only subdued them, but, after eighteen thousand of them were killed upon the spot, kept them in awe with garrisons, as a check upon them; charged the land with a contribution, and taxed the people by the head.

David, during the course of his regal administration, attended most punctually to the strictest laws of equity, and piously resolved to establish his throne in truth and righteousness. He made Joab, the son of Zeruiah, his general, and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, the keeper of his records.

He chose out of the house of Phinehas, Abiathar and Zadok, who were his friends, to be his priests, and Seraiah for secretary. Benaiah the son of Jehoiada commanded

^{*} The Valley of Salt here is thought by many to be the places adjoining to the Dead sea; but as the country of the Edomites, whom David subdued in his return from his expedition into Syria, must necessarily lie towards the east of Canaan, we must look for some other Valley of Salt in the confines of that country. Now about a league southward from the city of Palmyra, or Tadmor, in the road to Edom, we find a large plain, abounding with salt-pits, whence a great part of Syria is furnished with that commodity; and therefore it is very probable, that the battle between David's generals and the Edomites was fought in this plain; which is about two days' journey from Bozrah, the capital city of the eastern Edom, whence the people might march out to meet David's forces, and oppose them in their return home. - Calmet's Commentary.

his body-guards,* and the king's elder sons were still incorporated into that body.

Having made the necessary regulations in his domestic concerns, and settled the officers of his state, David turned his attention upon his old and dear friend and associate Jonathan, and upon the solemn league of mutual amity that had passed betwixt them; for he had this virtue

* These guards are called in the text the Cherethites and the Pelethites, but who they were, is variously conjectured. That they were soldiers. is evident, from their being mentioned as present at the proclamation of king Solomon against Adonijah, which could not conveniently have been done without some armed force, to protect the persons that proclaimed him: and that they were not common soldiers, but the constant guards of David's person, is manifest from the title of 'keepers of the body,' which Josephus gives them. Their arms, it is supposed, were bows, arrows, and slings. The number of them may be conjectured from the targets and shields of gold which Solomon made, which were 500, and for the use of his guard. Some are of opinion, that they were men of a gigantic stature; but we find no ground for that, though they were doubtless proper and robust men, (as we speak) and of known fidelity to their prince, 2 Sam. xv. 18. and xx. 7. Others again think, that they were Philistines; but it is hardly supposeable that David would have any of these hated, uncircumcised people to be his body-guard; neither can we believe that the Israelitish soldiers would have taken it patiently, to see foreigners of that nation put in such places of honour and trust. Cherethite, however, is certainly but another name for Philistine, as appears from Zephaniah ii. 5. and therefore the question is, how came any of David's subjects to be called after that name? And the answer to this is obvious :- they were so called, because they went at first with him into Philistia, and continued there with him all the time that he was under the protection of Achish. These were the persons who accompanied him from the beginning, in his utmost distress, and clave to him in all calamities; and therefore it is no wonder, if men of such approved tidelity were made choice of for his body-guard; nor is it any uncommon thing in history, for legions, or bands of soldiers, to take their names, not from the place of their nativity, but their residence, and very frequently from the name of their captain, or com-mander. Since therefore, in 1 Chron. xii. 3. we find mention made of one Pelet, the son of Azmaveth, who resorted to David, while he was at Ziklag, but still under the protection of Achish, it is but supposing him to be their captain, and then we come to the reason, why they were called Pelethites, unless we suppose them rather de-nominated from Peleth, son of Jonathan, who was of the king's own tribe.—Patrick's Commentary, Poole's Annotations, and the History of the Life of King David.

among many others, that he never forgot an obligation to a friend; but looked upon a return for past benefits as the most sacred of all debts.

Upon this consideration, he made diligent inquiry what sons, friends, or relations, Jonathan had left behind him, that he might find matter for his gratitude to work upon. In pursuance of this inquiry, there was brought to him one Ziba, formerly a servant and a freeman of Saul's, as the most likely person to give him information.

The king asked him if he knew of any of Jonathan's family yet living, and where to find them; for he lay under an obligation to them, which he would gladly repay? Ziba made answer, that he had a son yet alive, whose name was Mephibosheth; who by a mischance happened to be lame of one leg; for that upon the news of that bloody battle wherein his grandfather and his father were slain, the nurse took him up in a fright to run away with him, and stumbling, let him fall out of her arms, and hurt him.

Upon farther examination the king had notice that he was brought up with one Machir, in the city of Lo-debar, and there he was at present.

Mephibosheth was accordingly sent for; who, when he approached the royal presence, prostrated himself at the king's feet, and did him reverence. The king bade him be of good cheer, and hope for better days; assuring him of all the comfort he could wish for from the favour of his prince. Accordingly he appointed him immediately to be put in possession of his father's and grandfather's estate, gave Ziba charge to look after it, and take care of the grounds, and from time to time to receive the profits, and bring them to Jerusalem. Mephibosheth, after this, lived in the king's house, sat constantly at the same table with him, and David gave him Ziba, and fifteen sons that he had, with twenty others belonging to him, for his servants.

Ziba, having received his commission, did his duty, and went his way; promising to govern himself in all things according to his order and instructions. But the son of Jonathan continued still at Jerusalem with David, and was treated in all respects as a child of the family, so great a tenderness had David for any thing that had a relation to Jonathan. Thus it was with Mephibosheth, to whom was born a son whose name was Micha.

About this time died Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, a friend and ally of David's;* and Hanun his son succeeded him. David, upon this revolution, sent ambassadors to him to condole his loss, comfort him in his affliction, and assure him of the same friendship and respect to himself that had been formerly paid to his father.

The chiefs of the Ammonites, esteeming the ingenuous conduct of David as proceeding from a malicious and hostile design, endeavoured by all means to irritate their king with calumnies against David; and to put jealousies in his head, that his servants were not in truth ambassadors, but spies, who, under pretext of a compliment of state, were sent to explore the strength and condition of the country; and that, therefore, without giving any heed to fair words, he should do well to be cautious and circumspect betimes, before things were gone beyond recovery. Hanun, over-ruled by this counsel, repugnant as it was both to truth and reason, sent the ambassadors back again with all

fore things were gone beyond recovery. Hanun, over-ruled by this counsel, repugnant as it was both to truth and reason, sent the ambassadors back again with all

* What the particular benefits which David had received from Nahash were, we are no where told in scripture; but some of the Jews say, that he fled to him when he durst stay no longer with Achish king of the Philistines, and that he received

the indignities of scorn and vile usage imaginable. They cut off one half of their vests, and so dismissed them in that dress, with the most reproachful behaviour, not deigning them an answer.‡ David was justly pro-

+ In a country where the hair was looked upon as so great an ornament, that many would rather die than part with it, the cutting it off was certainly one of the greatest indignities that human malice could invent; and the shaving only one half of their beards, which must make them look still more ridiculous; and cutting their garments even to the middle, and thereby exposing their nakedness, was an insult of so heinous and public a nature, that it would ill have become a man of David's martial spirit, and just sentiments of honour, to let it pass without punishment. How great a disgrace the loss of the hair was accounted in ancient times, is evident from the account of Damascenus, who says, that among the Indians, the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment that could be inflicted upon them; and Plutarch to like purpose tells us, that whenever a soldier among the Lacedemonians was convicted of cowardice, he was obliged to go with one part of his upper lip shaved, and the other not; nay, even at this day, no greater indignity can be offered to a Persian, than to cause his beard to be shaved; and Tavernier tells us, that when the Sophi caused an ambassador of Aurengzebe's to be used in this manner, telling him that he was not worthy to wear a beard, the emperor (in the manner as David here did) most highly resented the affront that was given to him in the person of his ambassador. Among the Arabs and Turks, the beard is even now reckoned the greatest ornament of a man, and is not trimmed or shaven, except in cases of extreme grief: the hand is almost constantly employed in smoothing the beard and keeping it in order, and it is often perfumed as if it were sacred. A shaven beard is reputed to be more unsightly than the loss of a nose; and a man who possesses a reverend beard is, in their opinion, incapable of acting dishonestly. If they wish to affirm any thing with peculiar solemnity, they swear by their beard; and when they express their good wishes for any one, they make use of the ensuing formula- God preserve thy blessed beard!' From these instances, we may readily un-derstand the full extent of the disgrace wantonly inflicted by the Ammonitish king, in cutting off half the beards of David's ambassadors. Niebuhr relates, that if any one cut off his beard, after having recited a fatha, or prayer, which is considered in the nature of a vow never to cut it off, he is liable to be severely punished, and also to become the laughing-stock of those who profess his faith .-Patrick, Calmet, and Horne.

‡ Ambassadors were usually persons of great worth or eminent station, who, by their quality and deportment, might command respect and attention from their very enemies. They were accordingly held sacred among all people, even when at war; and what injuries and affronts soever had

^{*} What the particular benefits which David had received from Nahash were, we are no where told in scripture; but some of the Jews say, that he fled to him when he durst stay no longer with Achish king of the Philistines, and that he received him very kindly; others, that he entertained his relations, when the king of Moab, to whom he had committed them, slew some of them: but the most likely opinion is, that as he was a bitter enemy to Saul, who had given him a great overthrow, he, for that very reason, became a friend to David, when he perceived how Saul persecuted him, and thereupon might send him relief and assistance, and perhaps offer him protection in his kingdom. —Patrick's Commentary.

voked at the indignity offered to his embassy, that he immediately declared his resolution publicly to right himself upon the Ammonites by an open war, and to call their king to an account for what he had done. The principals and allies of the Ammonites were so conscious to themselves that their perfidy and breach of faith, together with the scandalous manner of it, were wholly unpardonable; that upon the first news of David's determination to vindicate himself by arms, they found themselves necessitated, in their own defence, to encounter force with force, and so prepared for a war.

They sent their ambassadors to Syrus, the king of Mesopotamia, with a thousand silver talents to bring him into the alliance; which he accepted of, and engaged also the king of Zoba. These two kings had betwixt them about twenty thousand foot. They likewise purchased the assistance of the king of Maacah, and of Ishtob, who had two and twenty thousand men in arms.

been committed, heaven and earth were thought to be concerned to prosecute the injuries done to them, with the utmost vengeance. So deep is this impression engraved on the human mind, that the Lacedæmonians, who had inhumanly murdered the Persian ambassadors, firmly believed their gods would accept none of their oblations and sacrifices, which were all found polluted with direful omens, till two noblemen of Sparta were sent as an expiatory sacrifice to Xerxes, to atone for the death of his ambassadors by their own. That emperor, indeed, gave them leave to return in safety, without any other ignominy than what they suffered by a severe reflection on the Spartan nation, whose barbarous cruelty he professed he would not imitate, though he had been so greatly provoked. The Divine vengeance, however, suffered them not to go unpunished, but inflicted what those men had assumed to themselves, on their sons, who being sent on an embassy into Asia, were betrayed into the hands of the Athenians, who put them to death; which Herodotus, who relates the story, considered as a just revenge from heaven, for the cruelty of the Lacedamonians. The character of ambassadors has been invested with such inviolable sanctity, by the mutual hopes and fears of nations; for, if persons of that character might be treated injuriously, the friendly relations between different states could not be maintained; and all hopes of peace and reconciliation amongst enemies must be banished for ever out of the world .- Script. Illust.

Notwithstanding the mighty preparation of the Ammonites in conjunction with many potent allies, David's heart failed him not, he knew he had a gracious God to trust to; his cause was good, and the injury he had received intolerable; wherefore he was resolved to cast himself upon God's providence, and the justice of his arms for satisfaction; so that, committing the management of the war to Joab, he sent him away with the choicest of his troops against the enemy.

He marched directly towards their capital city Rabbah, and encamped before it. The enemy marched forth out of the town, and divided into two bodies; the one consisting of auxiliaries, which they drew up in the open field; the other, being composed only of Ammonites, ranged themselves before the gates that looked toward the Israelites.

Joab, considering this disposition of the enemy's army, disposed of his troops likewise in the same order; and at the head of the best men he had, he himself prepared to charge Syrus, and the confederate kings, with one division, whilst he gave his brother Abishai the command of the other, with orders to attack the Ammonites; having agreed upon it before hand that in case Syrus should get the better of Joab, Abishai should come in to his relief, and Joab to send aid to Abishai if he should be pressed by the Ammonites.

Joab hereupon dismissed his brother, encouraging him to behave himself valiantly, and to make good the reputation both of the cause and of the action. Joab made the onset upon Syrus, who stood very bravely at first; but numbers of his men falling, the rest fled, and the Ammonites upon the very sight of their disorder, betook themselves likewise to flight, after the example of their fellows, without staying for the coming up of Abishai, and retreated as fast as they could into the town; so that Joab, after a dreadful havoc of the enemy, returned to Jerusalem with his victorious army.

Though the Ammonites received so great a shock from the army of Israel, which had so frequently shown their vast superiority over them, they still maintained their enmity, and determined upon being revenged. Accordingly they sent to Hadadezer, king of the Syrians, beyond Euphrates, and agreed with him for an auxiliary army upon certain terms: Shobach was his lieutenant-general, over an army of eighty thousand foot, and ten thousand horse.

David, receiving intelligence of the mighty strength of the Ammonites, judged it improper to make war any longer by his deputies, so that he himself passed the river Jordan with the whole army, and joined battle with the enemy, killed forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, and came off a conqueror; Shobach, the general of Hadadezer, received a wound in this battle which proved mortal.

The people of Mesopotamia, upon this unfortunate overthrow, sent ambassadors with presents and addresses to David, and delivered themselves up; and the action being over, and the winter drawing on, he returned again safely to Jerusalem.

The king of Israel determining, by the blessing of God, on the conquest and subjection of all his enemies, the beginning of the following spring,* despatched Joab

* The most usual time of commencing military operations was at the return of the spring; the hardships of a winter campaign were then unknown. In the beginning of spring, says Josephus, David sent forth his commander-in-chief Joah, to make war with the Ammonites. In another part of his works, he says, that as soon as spring was begun, Adad levied and led forth his army against the Hebrews. Antiochus also prepared to invade Judea at the first appearance of apring; and Vespasian, earnest to put an end to the war in Judea, marched with his whole army to Antipatris, at the commencement of the same season. The sacred historian seems to suppose, that there was one particular time of the year to which the operations of war were commonly limited: And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time kings go forth to battle, that David sent to Joab and his servants and all Israel, and they destroyed the children of Ammon and hesieged Rabbah. The kings and armies of the Fast, says Chardin, do not march but when there

Though the Ammonites received so his general, with a full commission to proeat a shock from the army of Israel, secute the war against the Ammonites.

This commission he executed with great success and punctuality; for he not only laid waste the country, but having driven them into Rabbah, their metropolis, for safety, he laid close siege to the place with a very powerful army.

David was undoubtedly a just and pious man, and a strict observer of the laws of his country; but yet, as the best of men are liable to temptations, and the influence of their passions, at this time he had the misfortune to fall into a grievous sin; the occasion of which was as follows.

As he was walking for his diversion one day, toward the cool of the evening, upon his terrace,† he happened to descry a woman bathing herself in her own house,‡ who was a person of most exquisite shape and beauty, by name Bathsheba.

He fell in love with her immediately, and under the influence of a passionate appetite, had her brought to his bed.

is grass, and when they can encamp, which time is April. But in modern times, this rule is disregarded, and the history of the crusades records expeditions and battles in every month of the year.—Script. Illust.

year.—Script. Illust.

† The manner of building in all eastern countries, was to have their houses flat-roofed, with a terrace and parapet wall, for the convenience of walking in the cool air; and as David's palace was built on one of the highest places of mount Sion, he might easily look down upon the lower parts of the town, and take a view of all the gardens that were within a due distance.—Le Clerc's Commentary.

‡ Whether it was in her garden, or court-yard,

overlooked by the palace, or in some apartment in her house whose windows opened that way, that this woman bathed herself, is not so certain. Tradition points out the place of a fountain still called after her name, which would make it probable that she bathed in a garden, did not Josephus expressly declare that it was in her own house, as indeed the natural modesty and decency of her sex, as well as the circumstance of the time—for then it was evening—make his account more probable; nor can it be doubted but that the declining rays of the sun, shooting into the inmost recesses of her chamber, and throwing a great lustre around her, might discover her very clearly to very distant eyes, without the least suspicion on her part of any possibility of being seen, and, consequently,

with all the reserve of modesty proper to her sex.

some method for the concealment of it; as otherwise she must suffer death by the laws of the country.

Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, and armour-bearer to Joab, was sent for by the king, who inquired of him concerning the state of the army, and the success of the siege. Having informed the king, that there was every reasonable prospect of happily terminating the campaign, he entertained him, and then dismissing him, bade him go home to his wife; but finding afterwards that he passed away that night in the porch of the king's palace,* and among his guards, he asked him, "How it came to pass that having been so long away from his wife, he had not rather chosen to go home, than spend his time elsewhere, so contrary to the practice of all other men under his circumstances?"

"Sir," replied he, "I did not think it fair and honourable to indulge myself in the arms of my wife, at the same time when my general and fellow-soldiers lie in an enemy's country upon the ground." The king then told him, "He should now stay there one night more, and the next day he would send him back again to the

When the king went to supper, he caused Uriah to sup with him, and made him drink so freely, that although he became thereby almost drunk, yet he never thought of going to his wife all this while, he had done the former.

Soon after this, she found herself with it was done by his order; the contrivance child, and desired the king to consider of was this: David appointed Joab to command him upon the first dangerous attack, where his companions might desert him and leave him to certain destruction from the enemy.

> This letter he gave to Uriah,+ under his own hand and seal, to be delivered to Joab; who, upon the receipt, followed the king's direction, and put Uriah upon a desperate attack, where he knew the enemies to be strongest, with several brave men to back him, for the countenance of the design; Joab promising to second him with the whole army, upon the least breach or possibility of entrance into the town. To enforce the iniquitous purpose, Joab reminded him of the great reputation he had already acquired by his military conduct, and urged the present opportunity of adding to his fame, and

but spent that night again in the court, as This highly incensed David; insomuch that he wrote to Joab, that he was much dissatisfied with Uriah, and would have him punished according to his desert; and then proposed to him a method to bring it about, without giving any suspicion that

^{*} In Bengal, servants and others generally sleep in the verandah or porch, in front of their master's house. The Arab servants in Egypt do the same. In this way 'Uriah slept at the door of the king's house, with all the servants of his lord.'

[†] This was the sum of treachery and villany. He made this most noble man the carrier of letters which prescribed the mode in which he was to be murdered. This case some have likened to that of Bellerophon, son of Glaucus, king of Ephyra, who being in the court of Prætus, king of the Argives, his queen Antia, or as others Sthenobæa, fell violently in love with him; but he, refusing to gratify her criminal passion, was in revenge accused by her to Prœtus her husband, as having attempted to corrupt her. Prætus, not willing to violate the laws of hospitality by slaying him in his own house, wrote letters to Johates, king of Lycia, the father of Sthenobæa, and sent them by the hand of Bellerophon, stating his crime, and desiring Jobates to put him to death. To meet the wishes of his son-in-law, and keep his own hands innocent of blood, he sent him with a small force against a very warlike people called the Solymi; but contrary to all expectation, he not only escaped with his life, but gained a complete victory over them. He was afterwards sent upon several equally dangerous and hopeless expeditions, but still came off with success; and to reward him Jobates gave him one of his daughters to wife, and a part of his kingdom. Sthenobæa, hearing this, through rage and despair killed herself. I have given this history at large, because many have thought it, not only to be parallel to that of Uriah, but to be a fabulous formation from the scripture fact: for my own part, I scarcely see in them any correspondence, but in the simple circumstance that both carried those letters which contained their own condemnation. From the fable of Belierophon came the proverb, Bellerophontis literas porture, 'to carry one's own condemnation.'—Dr A. Clarke.

enhancing his esteem with his king and brave; but his temerity brought him to a master. shameful end; for in all these cases, cau-

Uriah, with great cheerfulness and assurance, undertook the post, while Joab gave his companions private orders to withdraw, and leave him as soon as they found themselves in any danger. Israelites pressing hard upon the wall, put the Ammonites into a dreadful apprehension that they would force the town; whereupon they threw open their gates, and made a desperate sally. This served as a kind of signal to Uriah's companions, who, according to Joab's order, basely abandoned their leader at the instant of imminent danger, and left that valiant man to fall a victim to confederate fraud and ingratitude.

He did all the execution that was possible to be done by a single man against numbers; and after several wounds received, fell like a man of honour, with his face to the enemy.

Some few of his friends, who also were ashamed to fly, not being made privy to the plot, fell with him at the same time.

David's design being thus executed, Joab sent him an express, giving an account that to make short work of a siege, that was otherwise likely to be tedious, he had given an assault to the town, lost men in the attempt, and was at last beaten off, and forced back again to the camp. Now, said Joab to the messenger, "if you find the king displeased at the news you carry him, tell him withal, that Uriah fell in the attack."

David, upon the hearing of this story, was greatly incensed, and thus bespoke the messenger: "What! for men with their naked bodies to think of storming stone walls? Why did they not rather make use of mines or engines? One would think they would have taken the example of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, for a warning, that was slain at Thebes, by a piece of millstone thrown down upon his head by an old woman from the battlements. The man was otherwise very

brave; but his temerity brought him to a shameful end; for in all these cases, caution is as necessary as courage, and the safest counsels are the best. All people in the business of war, should do well to consult history and experience, what has generally succeeded well, and what otherwise, and to consider upon what point the stress lies, either of the one, or of the other, and thus act accordingly."

While the king was thus expressing his resentment and displeasure at the ill management of the action, the messenger took an occasion privately to tell him of the death of Uriah.

"Well," said David, "these are common accidents; the chance of war is various, and soldiers must content themselves to take the best and worst by turns. Do you tell Joab what I say; but tell him moreover, that for the future I would rather have him do the business by casting up mounts, or by machines, than by open force. But let him know upon the whole that I would have the city razed and levelled with the ground, and the inhabitants all put to the sword, without sparing so much as one individual person."

With these instructions the messenger went presently away to Joab.

Upon the news of Uriah's death, Bathsheba mourned several days for her husband, but as soon as her days of mourning were over, David took her to wife, and had by her a male child soon after.

This match was so far from being acceptable and well-pleasing to God, that he was highly offended at it, and gave the prophet Nathan to understand his displeasure in a dream; blaming David exceedingly for what he had done.

Nathan being a man of great discernment, and considering how little regard princes commonly have in the career of their passions to the rules of justice, chose rather to communicate his message to David in mild terms, by way of allusion, than abruptly accost him by a direct denunciation of the displeasure and threat-

ening of the Almighty; addressing him thus:

"There were two men, who lived in the same city; the one had abundance of flocks and herds of all sorts, such as oxen, sheep, and the like; and was, in fine, a very rich man; the other was master of no more than one ewe-lamb, which he brought up, and fed with his own children, and loved it as his daughter. The rich man had a stranger come to his house, whom he was bound in hospitality and in honour to entertain; but rather than treat him out of his own store, he sent and forced away the poor man's only lamb for the stranger's supper."

"A villain," says the king, in a passion, "to do a thing so base and so unjust! I would have him make fourfold satisfaction, and die for it besides."+

* The poignancy of the parable began now to appear, 'the rich man,' we are told, 'had exceeding many flocks and herds,' but the whole substance of the other was comprised in one little ewe-lamb. A simile this, which is most beautifully descriptive, and truly poetical; a lamb is generally used as the emblem of innocence, designedly thrown in to awaken the king's tenderness and pity, from a consideration of the weak and defenceless condition of a female. Nathan, in his resemblance, cannot be said to have surpassed the truth, considering how fond many persons were anciently, not only of lambs, but of several other creatures, which they suffered to eat with them at their tables, and lie with them in their beds; and that even at this day it is a custom in Arabia, (which is contiguous to Judea) to have one of the finest lambs in the flock brought up in the house, and fed with the children. Most commentators take notice, that Nathan did not go so far in the parable as to say any thing of the rich man's kill-ing the poor man. This certainly would have made the resemblance more complete, but it is therefore omitted, that David might not so readily apprehend Nathan's meaning, and so be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself; whereupon the prophet had a fair opportunity to show him, that if the rich man, who took away the poor man's lamb, deserved death, according to his own judgment, how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but caused him to be slain likewise by the enemies of Israel.

† The admirably devised parable of Nathan is perhaps one of the finest specimens of the genuine pathetic style that can be found in the Old Testament; and David's eager condemnation of the unsuspected offender at the same time displays striking instance of the delusion of sin and the

"Why then," replied Nathant immediately, "thou art the man, who deserves such punishment, and out of thy own mouth hast pronounced judgment upon thyself."

The prophet then gave him an account of his vision, and of God's high displeasure against him, reminding him of his ingratitude to that providence that had constituted him king of Israel, given him the command of all the neighbouring nations thereabouts, and delivered him several times out of Saul's hands, &c.;—and representing to him the iniquity of his conduct,

blindness of self-love. "He, who had lived a whole year in the unrepented commission of one of the blackest crimes in the decalogue-and who, to secure to himself the object for which he had committed it, perpetrated another almost more heinous, and that with an hypocrisy suited to his character—he could in an instant denounce death on the imaginary offender for a fault comparatively trilling."- Seeing, he saw not, and hearing, he heard not;' he immediately saw the iniquity and barbarity of the rich man's proceedings: his heart was in a moment fired with indignation at the thought of it; "the vehemence of his resentment even over-stepped the limits of his natural justice, in decreeing a punishment disproportioned to the crime, while he remained dead to his own delinquency. A pointed parable instantly surprised him into the most bitter self-reproach. A direct accusation might have inflamed him before he was thus prepared; and in the one case he might have punished the accuser, by whom, in the other, he was brought into the deepest self-abasement. The prudent prophet did not rashly reproach the king with the crime which he wished him to condemn; but placed the fault at such a distance, and in such a point of view, that he first procured his impartial judgment, and afterwards his self-condemnation: —an important lesson, not only to the offender, but also to the reprover."—Hannah More.

† We learn little more of this great man in the sacred writings, but that he was David's prophet, intimate counseller, and historiographer. Josephus says of him, that he was a polite and a prudent man, one who knew how to temper the severity of wisdom with sweetness of manners. And Grotius compares him to Manius Lepidus, of whom Tacitus says, that he had a talent of turning away Tiberins's mind from those cruel purposes, to which the vile flattery of others inclined him, and was, at the same time, in equal favour and authority with him. Nathan certainly knew the art of reproving kings with authority, and yet without giving offence. So far from that, he grew in his prince's favour and estimation as long as he lived; insomuch, that David—as tradition tells us—called one son after his name, and committed another (even his beloved Solomon), to his care and tuition.— The

History of the Life of King David.

that he who had so many lawful wives allowed him, should take away, and marry another man's wife, in defiance of God and man, and betray her husband to the enemy, and to death. The prophet then predicted to him, that he should live to see his women ravished by one of his own sons, and that son enter into a design upon the life of his father; and in a word, that for this secret sin of his he should be brought to open shame and punishment; concluding with this presage, that the son of his unlawful love should be very short-lived.

This denunciation of the prophet struck David with terror and confusion, and drew from him a penitential confession with tears, that he had sinned against God.*

David being a righteous man, and (this

that he who had so many lawful wives allowed him, should take away, and marry another man's wife, in defiance of God and man, and betray her husband to the enemy, and to death. The prophet then predicted to him, that he should live to see his women rayished by one of his own

The prophet having thus executed the Divine command, returned to his own habitation; but soon after his departure, the Lord struck the child, that Uriah's wife bare unto David, with a grievous sickness, which was so sensible an affliction to the father, that he took his chamber upon it, and for seven days together prostrated himself upon the ground in sackcloth and mourning; nor could he be persuaded by his servants to receive any sustenance; beseeching Almighty God to spare the child, having the greatest tenderness imaginable for the mother. But his prayers proved ineffectual; for upon the seventh day the child died.+

None of the family durst speak a word of it to the king; for he, they thought, that was so given up to sorrow, as to deny himself the most necessary comforts and refreshments of life, when the child was

^{*} The fall of David is one of the most instructive and alarming recorded in that most faithful and impartial of all histories, the Holy Bible. The transgression of one idle and unguarded moment pierced him through with many sorrows, and embittered the remainder of his life, giving occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme on account of this crying offence of the man after God's own heart. When he only cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, his heart smote him for the indignity thus offered to his master; but when he treacherously murdered a faithful and gallant soldier, who was fighting his battles, after having defiled his bed, his heart smote him not: we read at least of no compunction or remorse of conscience, till Nathan was sent to reprove him. Then indeed his sorrow was extreme, and the psalms which he composed on this occasion, express in the most pathetic strains the anguish of a wounded spirit, and the bitterness of his repentance. Still, the rising again of David holds forth no encouragement to sinners who may wish to shelter themselves under his example, or flatter themselves with the hope of obtaining similar longiveness, for, though his life was spared, yet God inflicted those temporal judgments, which the prophet denounced, that his soul might be saved in the day of the Lord, and that others, admonished by his example, might be more afraid to offend. The with the hope of obtaining similar forgiveness; remainder of his days was as disastrous as the beginning had been prosperous. Rape, incest, murder, and rebellion, raged among his children: he was deserted by his friends, reviled by his enemies, banished from his capital, plunged into the deepest affliction by the ingratitude and death of his favourite and rebellious son Absalom; and, to fill up the measure of his calamities, had a dreadful plague brought upon his subjects by his last offence; so that he died, exhausted at seventy years of age, still older in constitution than in years .- Dr Hales.

⁺ It has been asked, why the death of this child should be deprecated by David in the most solemn manner, and as the greatest punishment, when, had it lived, it would have been a lasting monument of the guilt and infamy of its parents? the best way to account for this, is to ascribe it to David's excessive fondness for Bathsheba, which so strongly attached him to every offspring of her's, and made him forget every thing in this child, but that motive of endearment. Besides, it must be allowed that there is something in human nature. which prompts us to rate things after a very unaccountable manner, by estimating them, not according to their real worth, but according to the trouble and expense, or even distress they cost us. Nor should it be forgot, that David's excessive mourning proceeded not so much from the fear of losing the child, as from a deep sense of his sin, and of the Divine displeasure manifested in the and of the Divine displeasure manifested in the child's sickness; and probably also, from a just apprehension of the great injury he had done to the infant by his sin, and which he thought himself bound in justice, as far as he was able, to repair by incessant prayer and intercession, accompanied with tokens of the most sincere and unaffected sorrow and humiliation for his past offences.

only sick, would afflict himself with a more intense and severe abstinence, if he should know it to be dead.

David observed such a disorder in the countenances of his family, that he took it for certain there was something extraordinary in the case, that they durst not acquaint him with, which he concluded could be nothing else but the death of the child: and, upon examining one of his servants about it, he found it so to be. The child being dead, and all mourning and prayer therefore unnecessary, David arose, washed himself, changed his clothes, and went directly to the tabernacle to worship; commanding his servants, after this, to set his supper upon the table.

His kindred and domestics were all in admiration and astonishment at a change so unexpected; for while the child was but dangerously ill, there was nothing but passion and extravagance; and now it was dead, the father came to himself again. This was their opinion of the case; but they had yet a curiosity to know what might be the true reason of it; wherein David was very free with them upon a decent intimation of the desire they had to be better informed.

"While the child was living," said he, "and not quite out of hope of recovery, I omitted no opportunity of application to God for its life; but when I saw it was dead, it would have been a foolish thing to torment myself any further to no manner of purpose."

The prudence of this resolution was highly commended by all that had heard him.

Bathsheba, after this, in her due time, according to the course of nature, brought David a son; who, by the direction of the prophet Nathan, gave him the name of Solomon.*

David's general, Joab, had by this time so distressed the Ammonites, by cutting them off from all manner of provisions, that they were almost reduced to the last extremity of hunger and thirst; for they had only one little spring left them, which they were obliged to draw by short allowances, for fear of exhausting, or losing that too.

Joab therefore sent David a particular account of the state of the siege, desiring the honour of his presence there, to put the last hand himself to the destruction of the city, as an action worthy to be found upon record in the history of his other heroical exploits.

David was so fully satisfied with the wisdom, faith, and zeal of his general, that he put himself presently at the head of his army, and marching to the assault of Rabbah, took it by storm, and gave the pillage of it to the soldiers, taking only for himself a golden crown of the king's, of a talent weight+ and a rich sardonyx

scripture however never calls him by any other name than that of Solomon: for what reason indeed, is quite uncertain, unless we may hazard a conjecture, that the people, being long harassed in war during his father's reign, might perhaps be pleased with this name rather than the other, to

^{*} The word Solomon is properly derived from Schalom, which signifies peace, intimating that his reign should be peaceable; but by God's ap-

intimate their hopes and longing desires of peace.

† The weight of this crown seems not a little monstrous. The weight of a talent, which, upon the lowest computation, amounts to no less than 123 pounds, is allowed to be too much for one neck to sustain; but then we should consider, that besides the crown that was usually worn, it was customary, in some nations, for kings to have very large ones, even to a size equal to this, either hung, or supported over the throne, where, at their coronation, or upon other solemn occasions, they were wont to sit. The Jewish doctors indeed have a very odd conceit, viz. that David, when he took this crown from the king of Ammon, hung it up on high by a certain loadstone, that he had; as if the power of the magnet were to attract gold as well as iron. But let that be as it will, it is but to suppose that the crown, here under debate, was of this larger kind, and that, by some means or other, it was supported over the king's head, while he was sitting on his throne, and then there will be an apparent reason for taking the crown from off, or, as the Hebrew words will bear it, from over the king's head, and placing it, in like manner, over David's head, even to indicate the translation of his kingdom to David. It is a common thing pointment the prophet Nathan gave him the name however in Hebrew, as well as other learned lanof Jedidiah, that is, 'the beloved of God.' The guages, to have the same word signify both the

upon it, which he wore constantly upon the other places belonging to the Ammonhis head afterward for an ornament: not to mention an infinite variety of other rich booty that was found in the city.

The inhabitants which remained in the city were subjected to the most acute as well as abject punishment, * as were all

weight and value of any thing. And that the price or worth of the crown is here the meaning of the phrase, we have the more reason to think, because mention is made of an addition of precious stones, which are never estimated by the weight of gold. Josephus tells us of one stone of great value in the middle of the crown, which he calls a sardonyx; and as we may suppose that there were other jewels of several kinds, placed at their proper distances, these, in proportion as they height-ened the value, must lessen the weight of the crown, and verify what the same historian tells us of it, viz. that David wore it constantly on his head afterward for an ornament.-Stackhouse.

* Some of them he sawed asunder; others he tore in pieces with harrows armed with great iron teeth; or lacerated their bodies with sharp sickles or sharp stones; or rather, he dragged them through the place where bricks were made, and grated their flesh upon the ragged sherds. Had David been the inventor of such frightful punishments, we might have justly reckoned him a man of the same cruel and brutal spirit as was Caligula, who, in after-ages, as Suetonius tells us, was wont to take a great delight in inflicting them: but, the truth is, that these were the punishments which the Ammonites inflicted upon the Jews whenever they took them prisoners; and therefore David, when he conquered their country, and reduced their capital city, used them with the like cruelty: not every one of them indiscriminately, but such only as appeared in arms against him, and had either advised, or approved the advice of putting such a disgrace upon his messengers. Ammonites, it is certain, were early initiated into all the cruelties of the people of Canaan: when they invested Jabesh-gilead and the besieged made an offer to surrender, the easiest condition that they would grant them, was, that they might thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it as a reproach upon Israel for ever; which one instance, as I take it, is in the room of ten thousand proofs, to demonstrate, that these Ammonites were monsters of barbarity; and that therefore king David was no more culpable for retaliating upon them the same cruelties that they used to inflict on others, than the people of Agrigentum were, for burning Phalaris in his own bull, or Theseus the hero, for stretching Procrastes beyond the dimensions of his own bed. For even heathen casuists have determined, that no law can be more just and equitable, than that which decreed artists of cruelty to perish by their own arts. The particular punishment of passing through the brick-kilns, an ingenious author seems fairly to account for, by making this conjecture:—"It is very well known," says he, "that the Jews were slaves in Egypt, and particularly employed in brick-making. Now it is natural

ites, which did not acknowledge the king of Israel as sovereign.

But the glories of this conquest were soon sullied by a melancholy circumstance, that fell out in David's family.

The king had a daughter, as yet a virgin, and highly celebrated for the endowments of her mind, as well as the beauty of her person. Her name was Tamar, and she and Absalom had one mother.

Amnon, the eldest son of David, fell desperately in love with her: + and finding, that betwixt her own modesty, and the watch she had upon her, there was no hope of succeeding, he pined away into a kind of languishing consumption.

for all people at enmity to reproach one another with the meanness and baseness of their original. As therefore the Ammonites were a cruel and insolent enemy, and nothing could be more natural for men of their temper, when they got any Jews in their power, than to cry out, 'Send the slaves to the brick-kilns, and so torture them to death; ' so nothing could be more natural than for the Jews, when they got an advantage over them, to return them the same treatment." However this be, it is them the same treatment." However this be, it is certain that the siege of Rabbah began before David had any criminal commerce with Bathsheba. and if the town was not taken till after Solomon's birth, as the sequel of his history seems to imply, the siege must last for about two years; in which time, upon the supposition that David continued in an obdurate state of sin and impenitence, and was therefore deprived of that mild and merciful spirit for which he had formerly been so remarkable, there is no wonder, if, being now become cruel and hard-hearted, as well as exasperated with the length of the siege, he treated the Ammonites in the same outrageous manner that they were accustomed to treat his subjects, not only to retaliate the thing upon them, but to deter all future ages likewise from violating the right of nations, by treating the persons of public ambassadors with contempt .- Stackhouse.

+ Virgins of the blood-royal were kept secluded in apartments separate from the commerce of men, into which not only strangers, but even their own fathers, were not permitted to enter. Amnon however, at some time or other had seen the beautiful Tamar, or otherwise he could not have conceived so strong a passion for her. Upon some certain ceremonial occasions, indeed, it was customary for the young women to walk out and show themselves; but, considering their close confinement at other times, it was hardly possible for Amnon to find an opportunity of declaring his passion, much more of gratifying it; and therefore out of pure despair, he pined himself into a consumption.—Calmet's Commentary.

person of good sense and judgment, taking notice of this change in Amnon, and that he grew every day worse and worse, went to him, and asked him, what he niled? and in short, if he was not in love? for he had a suspicion of it.

Amnon, without any difficulty, owned himself to have a violent passion for his own sister. Upon this, the other immediately suggested to him a method how he

might accomplish his end.

Jonadab's fatal advice was, for Amnon to pretend sickness, and the first time his father came to visit him, to request that he would send his sister to him: this was granted, and Amnon desired to have some cakes of his sister's making, for he could not eat any thing else. Therefore she took the flour, kneaded it, raised and baked it, all in her brother's sight: and in conclusion, offered him some to eat, which he would not so much as taste, but called out to his servants immediately to withdraw, and let nobody come in to trouble him, for he would lay himself to rest.

As soon as the room was cleared of the attendants, he desired his sister to carry what she had prepared for him, into an inner chamber there, which she did, and her brother taking advantage of that privaey, laid hold of her; and by the utmost importunity of a violent passion, pressed and courted her to the gratifying of his brutal appetite.

Tamar, employing the most earnest entreaties and expostulations,* urged him to

Jonadab, his friend and kinsman, and a desist, and thus hoped for the present to amuse him with some distant promise of compliance; but all her endeavours were vain, for strength, enforced by a raging passion, overcame every obstacle, and her virtue fell a victim to her brother's inordinate lust.

No sooner had he committed the villany, and quenched his criminal flame, than his extravagant love degenerated into the contrary extreme, of implacable hatred; insomuch that he urged her with reproaches and ill language to depart his chamber, and be gone.+

better, and therefore should act otherwise. 'Do not thou this folly.' She prays him, besides the scandal it would give, to recollect with himself on the heinousness of the crime, and how highly offensive it would be to the Divine Majesty. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? She beseeches him-besides the sin against God-to consider the disgrace it would be to her, who, after such a foul act, must be ashamed to look any one in the face. 'And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.' Lastly, she puts him in mind of his own reputation, which so vile an action would tarnish for ever, and make him be looked upon as a man void of all sense, religion, honour, and humanity. 'Now therefore, I pray thee, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.' It is a common opinion among the Jewish doctors, that in the war which king David had with the king of Geshur, he took Maacah, his daughter captive, and (as they fancy their law allows, Deut. xxi. 11.) lay with her for once only, and then begat this daughter; but that upon her becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he married her, and afterwards had Absalom. Tamar therefore being born while her mother was a Gentile, they suppose that she was not David's legal child, and that Amnon consequently might marry her: but all this is mere talk, without any shadow of proof. The most probable opinion is, that she was neither ignorant of the law, (Lev. xviii. 11.) which prohibited such incestuous marriages, nor thought her father's power so great, as that he might dispense with the law upon this occasion, but merely that she said any thing which she thought would please him, to stop his solicitations, and rude attempts, and to escape for the present out of his hands .- Patrick's Commentary, and Jewish Antiquities.

† Interpreters seem to be a great loss to find out the reason why Amnon's love to his sister should so soon be converted into such a hatred as to make him act so rudely, so brutally towards her; but it is no uncommon thing for men of violent and irregular passions to pass from one extreme to another. The shame which accompanies every base action, the remorse, and repentance, and many bad consequences that immediately pursue it, make a recoil in every man's tem-

^{*} There is something so moving, and the arguments are so strong, in Tamar's speech to Amnon, that one would almost wonder why it did not pre-vail with him to desist. 'Nay, my brother, do not force me.' Here she reminds him of his relation to her, for which she hoped he would have such a reverence as not to meddle with her, though she herself were willing, much less to offer violence to her, which it was abominable to do even to a stranger, much more to one of the same blood. For no such thing ought to be done in Israel.' Whatever other nations did who had not the knowledge of God's laws, she begs him to consider that they both belonged to a nation which was God's peculiar people, had been instructed

"What," said she, "now ye have debauched me, am I to be exposed too? and sent away by day-light with all this confusion and horror upon me, to tell the world how barbarously you have used me? Nay, this treatment in cold blood is yet worse, if worse can be, even than the accursed act itself, under the impotency of an ungovernable passion to alleviate the crime."

But all remonstrance availed not, for Amnon, determined on her departure, commanded his servants to turn her out of the house.

Thus compelled, she went into the street, with ashes on her head,* and her vest (such as was then in fashion for persons of her quality) disordered and torn, and proceeded through the city crying out, and complaining how she had been abused and ravished.

Her brother Absalom had the fortune to meet her in this distraction and dress; and asking her what was the matter, she

per; and therefore it is no wonder, that an intemperate young man, who would not spare so much as his own sister, should, when the ardour of his lust was satisfied, be seized with a contrary passion, and hate the object he loved so much before, when he came coolly to compare the pleasure and the sin together, the shortness of the one, and the heinousness of the other. He hated his sister, when he should have hated himself; and as this outrageous treatment of her made it impossible for his guilt to be concealed, so God seems to have abandoned him to the tumult of his intemperate mind, on purpose to make this punishment of David's adultery more flagrant, and the prophet's prediction of 'raising up evil to him out of his own house,' 2 Sam. xii. 11. more conspicuous.—Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries, and the History of the Life of King David.

* That this was the ancient manner of expressing grief and concern for any loss or calamity, is evident from that passage of the prophet concerning the people of Tyre: 'They shall cry bitterly, cast dirt upon their heads, and wallow themselves in the ashes,' Ezek. xxvii. 30; from the behaviour of Achilles, upon the death of Patroclus,

as we have it in Homer:

Then sordid dust upon his head he cast, And with his hands his manly locks disgrac'd;

and from what Mezentius did upon the death of Lausus, according to Virgil:

With sordid dust defiles his silver hairs, And to the skies his helpless hands he rears.

"What," said she, "now ye have deuched me, am I to be exposed too? and the brutal indignity that he offered

Absalom informed her, in order to pacify her, that the dishonour was however not so great, considering it was the act of her own brother, which for the present subdued her clamour. After which, she lived for some time single in the house of her brother Absalom.

When the news was carried to king David, he was infinitely troubled at it; but Amnon being his eldest, and his beloved son, he was yet loath to put him to extremities.† Absalom, however, bore him a mortal grudge, and waited only a fair opportunity for revenge.‡

† The true reason as we suppose, why his father did not proceed with severity against him, was, because the case (as it then stood) was intricate and perplexed, and such as the law had made no provision for. The law concerning rapes is worded thus;— If a damsel, that is a virgin, be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die: the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife:' and again, 'If a man find a damsel, that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.' These are the two principal laws concerning this matter, but neither come up to the case now before us. For, had David punished Amnon's crime with death, as the former law requires, Tamar, in like manner, must have suffered too, (even though she was innocent) because 'she cried not out;' and though she was not a betrothed damsel, (as the case is put in the latter law) yet David could not compel Amnon to marry her, because such a marriage would have been incestuous; and therefore we may suppose, that though David might reprimand his son very severely for having wrought folly in Israel, yet he could not bring him before a public judicature, because the law did not properly extend to his case, or if he had made it extend, the innocent must have suffered with the guilty; and a rule of equity I think it is, rather to let the guilty escape, than that the innocent and injured should be destroyed.—Stackhouse.

‡ As Absalom neither threatened, nor expostulated, nor even took the least notice of what had passed, Amnon lulled himself into a belief that Absalom would not trouble him; whereas he had greater reason to apprehend that he was meditat-

ing some terrible revenge.

Two years after the rape of Tamar, Absalom having appointed a sheep-shearing* at Baal-hazor, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, invited his father and his brothers to the meeting. His father excused himself, offering as a plea, the inconvenience and expense that attended his removal from place to place, so that Absalom desired leave only for his brothers, which being obtained, he gave his domestics this order, that upon giving them the sign, when Amnon should be in his cups, they should fall upon him and kill him.

Absalom's stewards accordingly executed most punctually their master's command; for as soon as they observed Amnon waxed merry, and therefore not on his guard, they fell upon him, and slew him on the spot.

CHAPTER VI.

Absalom flies after the murder of his brother.—
Joab's invention to restore him to his favour.
—Absalom obtains leave to go to Hebron on a
perfidious design.—David quits his residence
at Jerusalem.—Divers stratagems concerted
to deprive him of his crown and dignity.—

* Sheep-shearing is an operation to which allusion is frequently made in the sacred volume. The wool in very remote times was not shorn with an iron instrument, but plucked off with the hand. From the concurrent testimony of several writers, the time when it is performed in Palestine, falls in the month of March. This time seems to have been spent by the eastern swains in more than usual hilarity. And it may be inferred from several hints in the scriptures, that the wealthier proprietors invited their friends and dependents to sumptuous entertainments. Nabal, on that joyous occasion, which the servants of David called a good, or festive day, although a churlish and niggardly man, 'held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king;' and on this occasion, Absalom treated his friends and relations in the same magnificent style. The modern Arabs are more frugal and parsimonious; yet their hearts, so little accustomed to expand with joyous feelings, acknowledge the powerful influence of increasing wealth, and dispose them to indulge in greater jollity than usual. On these occasions, they perhaps kill a lamb, or a goat, and treat their relations and friends; and at once to testify their respect for their guests, and add to the luxury of the feast, crown the festive board with new cheese and milk, dates and honey .- Paxton.

Absalom particularly seeks to obtain by fraud his father's kingdom; is assisted in his impious proceeding by several false courtiers.—David receives news of his son's disobedience and rebellion.—Engageth with him.—Totally defeats him.—He flies, and being found hanging by the hair to a bough, is slain by Joab.

THE fate of Amnon so terrified all the brothers, that they rode precipitately to acquaint their father, assured that he had likewise a design upon all their lives.

In the interim, comes a forerunner to David, with news that Absalom had put all his brothers to death. It was so terrible a surprise to David, to hear of the loss of so many of his sons, and by the hand of their own brother, that he abandoned himself to an inconsolable desperation; and without any further inquiry, or waiting for a confirmation of the report, though a wickedness almost incredible, he gave himself up to an insupportable anguish of thought; tearing his garments, and casting himself prostrate on the ground, lamenting not only the murdered, but the murderer himself.

But Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, desired him to ruminate upon the matter with temper and moderation, assuring him that he could not believe the report till further confirmation, though it was reasonable to expect that he might avenge himself of Amnon.

While they were in discourse they heard the trampling of the mules, and the hurry of people as approaching; and these were the king's sons, who had made their escape from the feast at the house of their brother.

The greeting of the father and his sons was not without tears on both sides; the father surprised at the sight of them living, whom he took to be dead: the sons lamenting the loss of their brother, and the father deploring the barbarous murder of a son. So there was sufficient cause for grief and lamentation.

Absalom, in the mean time retired to Geshur, where he continued three years-

son of eminence in that country.*

David had by this time a great desire to recall Absalom, not to punish him, but to have him home again; for the severity of his displeasure was now well nigh over; and these charitable inclinations were dexterously enough managed to Absalom's advantage, by the friendship of Joab, who enjoyed the king's confidence. In order to this end, he dealt with an artful woman of Tekoah,+ who was to put herself in mourning, as a person in great distress, and as an humble suppliant, to present the king with her case to this effect:

'That two of her sons in the country had had an unhappy quarrel, which grew to such animosity, that they fought upon it, and one of them was killed. Some of the friends of him who was slain, demanded justice upon him that had killed him.

in the house of his mother's father, a per- | So she was to beg of his majesty the life of her son, as the only hope and stay of her old age. She had no prospect of relief, but in his majesty's clemency; for her son's enemies were so malicious, that nothing else could satisfy them than the interposition of the king's authority.'

She performed her part, and the king granted her request; whereupon, with a dutiful acknowledgment of the king's grace and favour to a widow woman, and the mother of one only child, entreated another grant from his royal bounty.

Her suit was, 'That the king would in the first place be pleased to pardon his own son Absalom; for in beginning with a compassion to him, it would be effectually the ratifying of her own son's case, in his own family. Adding, it would be very hard for a father to lose one son by misadventure, and to kill another himself.'

The king presently surmised that this was a contrivance of Joab's; and upon discoursing with the woman, found his conjecture to be true. Upon this discovery David called for Joab, and told him that he had gained his point, and was now at liberty to bring Absalom back again when he thought fit, for his anger had subsided, and he had freely forgiven

Joab was very glad to hear it, did reverence to the king, hastened away to Geshur, and brought Absalom back with him to Jerusalem. The king being told of his coming, sent him word that matters were not as yet in so good a disposition as that it would be proper for him to appear in his presence; so that Absalom kept himself out of the king's sight, within his own walls, and with his private family. He had gone through much care and trouble: and his entertainment of late had been rather coarse than delicate; in short, he had lived in a manner not suitable to the dignity of a prince of the blood. But he still retained the beauty and gracefulness of his person to the highest degree of perfection. He cut his hair

which had been so grossly violated.—Stackhouse.

† Tekoah was a city in the tribe of Judah,
which lay south of Jerusalem, and about twelve miles distant from it. And herein does Joab's cunning appear not a little, that he made choice of a woman rather than a man, because women can more easily express their passions, and sooner gain pity in their miseries; a widow, which was a condition of life proper to move compassion; a 'grave woman,'—as Josephus calls her—which made her better fitted for addressing the king; and a woman, 'not known at Jerusalem,' but living at some distance in the country, that the case which she was to represent might not too readily be inquired into .- Poole's Annotations.

^{*} The sacred historian has taken care to clear David from any base connivance at Absalom's wickedness in murdering his brother Amnon, by telling us, that as soon as he had done it, he fled and went to Talmai, his grandfather by his mother's side, who was then king of Geshur. Geshur was a city in Syria, which lay on the other side of Jordan; and Absalom, who meditated the murder of his brother, and could not but foresee that it would be an act of high displeasure to his father, invited the princes of the blood to his country-seat, which was near the city Ephraim, not far from the river Jordan, that he might have a better opportunity, not only for putting in execution his wicked design, but of making his escape likewise: so that David (had he been ever so much minded) could not possibly have apprehended him, before he had got to a safe retreat; and where, it is easy to imagine, he would tell his tale so well, as to gain his grandfather's protection, if not approbation of the fact, which, with a small share of eloquence, might be so set off as to appear a ne-cessary vindication of the honour of their family,

every twelve months; in the compass of | ble, I am in a worse condition at home which time, it grew up to the weight of two hundred Babylonish shekels; that is, about thirty-three ounces.*

In this obscure state and condition he lived about two years in Jerusalem, and had children,-three sons, and one daughter who proved to be a miracle of beauty. She was married afterward to Rehoboam the son of Solomon; and had a son by him whose name was Abia.

Absalom, finding himself uneasy under his present circumstances, sent to Joab to use his interest with his father towards regaining him admission into his royal presence; and, in short, towards procuring him a thorough and absolute reconciliation. He waited a while for an answer; but receiving no satisfaction upon his message, sent some of his people to a neighbouring field of Joab's, to burn his corn as it stood there upon the ground.

Joab came to him, and expostulating the matter with him, asked him what he had ever done to deserve such unkind treatment at his hands? "Why," Absalom replied, "I had no way of getting you to me but that. I wrote to you about interceding for me to my father, and you have done nothing in it I perceive: pray, will you try if you can pacify him; for at this rate, if he goes on still to be inexorathan I was in my banishment."

Joab took pity of him upon this discourse, and plied the king so artfully and so effectually on his behalf, that his heart relented, and Absalom was immediately sent for to attend his father. He cast himself at the king's feet upon his first entrance into the room, and begged pardon for all his misdoings; whereupon David with his right hand took him up again, with the assurance of a solemn promise, that all old offences should be for ever buried in oblivion.

Absalom being re-established in the good opinion and esteem of his father, in a short time furnished himself with a splendid equipage, with chariots and horses; a numerous train and retinue of servants, and no less than fifty men to attend him as his body-guard.+ He was the first man still at the king's levee; not forgetting, on the other hand, to take all occasions also to ingratiate himself with the multitude, and to keep fair report with the people. If any man had a cause to be heard, and came for justice, he would address him in these familiar terms, "Friend, what is thy name? What countryman? What business? Can I do thee any good?" and the like.

When he found people out of humour, and dissatisfied with a cross verdict, or a hard judgment, (as they pretended;) "Why, this it is," he would say, "the king has evil counsellors about him. Nay, and God help him, mistakes the point himself sometimes, as well as another.

^{*} Mr Harmer is incorrect in supposing that the inspired historian mentions the length and weight of Absalom's hair with commendation; he describes it, on the contrary, as the instrument of his pride and vanity; as an object of general admiration among the courtiers and people of fashion; and perhaps as one of the means by which he stole the hearts of the thoughtless and the gay, who, less favoured by nature, might be proud to purchase it for the purpose of interweaving it with their own. So proud was that worthless person of his golden locks, that he wore them as long as he could endure their weight; and when he did poll them, at certain times, his vanity prompted him to have them weighed, that it might be seen how much they excelled those of other men; and the more to expose his puerile extravagance, the weight is noted in the scriptures of truth, as amounting to "two hundred shekels," which is equal to a little more than two Paris pounds .-

⁺ When he was recalled, and re-instated in the king's favour, it is no wonder that a young prince, of his gay temper, should multiply his attendants, and set up a rich equipage, to attract the eyes and admiration of mankind; or that his father, whose riches so well enabled him to bear the expense of this magnificence, and whose heart rejoiced per-haps to see his son the favourite of the people, did not restrain him in it; because a man of an open spirit himself loves to see his children make a figure in life, which, in all eastern countries. was a thing customary, and might here more especially be expected in the eldest, and heir presumptive to the crown.

Well! and so God speed ye, my friends; if I had been in somebody's place, things should never have gone at this rate." This was his method of stealing the affections of the people, and moulding them for his design; and the policy proved too effectual.

Having thus worked himself into the favour of the people, and gained over to his interest a very numerous and powerful party of zealous adherents, he began ambitiously to aspire after his father's crown, and, to promote his impious designs, solicited of David permission to go to Hebron, in order to perform a solemn vow that he had made during the course of his exile. Having obtained his request, he took a prodigious multitude; some whom he invited, and others that came voluntarily with him. Among the rest was Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's prime minister, with two hundred men of Jerusalem, who came thither to sacrifice, without the least imagination of a conspiracy. At length, however, the plot took, and Absalom, by the common voice of the people, was proclaimed king.*

The news of such ungrateful behaviour in his son, struck the king with surprise and consternation; he was astonished to think of a rebellious usurpation, from a wretch that could so soon forget his own late guilt, and his father's mercy, as to revolt into a second apostasy, so much more flagitious than the former; for he was first to lay violent hands upon his father's kingdom, though he himself knew it to be the special gift of God; and after that, to practise upon his very life too.

David being in this strait, bethought himself of passing the river Jordan into some place more secure; and therefore, with the advice of some of his intimate friends what course to take in this seditious juncture, he resolved to leave the care of his palace to ten of his concubines, quit Jerusalem, and commit the issue to God. He accordingly departed with great multitudes of people that carefully adhered to him, and joined themselves in his train, especially his own six hundred friends, that kept so close to him when he was hunted up and down by Saul, from one hiding-place to another.

The high priests, Abiathar and Zadok, and all the Levites there, were for going with him, and taking the ark along with them; but upon very good reasons he prevailed with them to stay, telling them, that God's providence was sufficient for his preservation, without any necessity of the holy ark being upon the place.†

life-time, and to be his successor after his death. For, as it would have been monstrously wicked in Absalom to have designed the destruction of so kind a father; so it is hard to conceive, how he could have gained to his party such a multitude of abettors in so villanous an enterprise. This however we may observe, that David looked upon their proceedings as an attempt upon his life; and that, whatever their first intentions were, they came at last to a resolution to have him killed, to make way for their own better security; -which may be a sufficient warning to all men, never to begin any thing that is wrong, for fear that it should lead them to the commission of that which they at first abhorred, when they find they cannot be safe in one wickedness, without perpetrating a greater.— Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries. + Either David might think it not decent to

^{*} It would really make one wonder, how any people could so easily abandon a prince, so brave, so happy, and successful as David had been; how they could forget his excellent qualities, or be unmindful of the services he had done the nation; but for this there may be some reasons assigned. In every nation there are always some turbulent and discontented spirits, who are uneasy with the present state of things, and promise themselves some benefit from a change. Saul's party was not as yet entirely extinct, and Joab, who was David's general, behaved with an insufferable pride and insolence. His crimes, which were very black, and which the king durst not punish, redounded upon him; and the king himself had given his enemies umbrage enough against him, in living with Bathsheba, after he had murdered her husband: but, what gave the fairest pretence of all, was the obstruction of justice in the civil administration; for had there not been something of this, Absalom could have had no grounds for making so loud complaints. These were some of the causes of so general a revolt in the people: and yet, after all, there might be something in what Abarbinel imagines, namely, that neither Absalom, nor the elders of Israel, nor the rest of the people, who were misled by them, had any intention to divest David of his crown and dignity, much less to take away his life; but only to substitute Absalom, as coadjutor to him, for the execution of the royal authority, during his

some private method of conveyance, where- filled the general's eye. He received inwhatever might occur during his absence, his cause, and revolted to Absalom. that related to his most important concern; and they acquitted themselves of that commission with great industry, by employing Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar: and Ittai, the Gittite, had so great a zeal for his own personal duty, and the service of his master, that he forced himself along with him, though he pressed him earnestly against it.

While the king and his adherents were ascending mount Olivet* barefooted, and

have the ark wander about with him he knew not whither, and so expose it to all the hazards and inconveniencies which he himself was like to undergo; or he might suppose, that this would be a means to expose the priests to the violence of Absalom's rage, (as he had before exposed them to Saul's fury upon another occasion) if God, in his judgment, should permit him to prevail; or this might look as a distrust of the Divine goodness, and that he placed more confidence in the token of God's presence, than he did in God him-self, who had preserved him in the long persecu-tion of Saul, when he had no ark with him. But what seems the chief reason, at that time, for his sending back the ark, was,-that the priests and Levites, (of whose fidelity he was sufficiently satisfied,) by giving him intelligence of the enemy's motions, might do him more service in Jerusalem than they could do in his camp .- Poole's Annotations.

* The mount of Olives, or Olivet, is situate east of Jerusalem, and separated from the city by the brook Kidron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat. On this mount Solomon built temples to the gods of the Ammonites and Moabites, out of complaisance to his wives. Hence the mount of Olives is called the mountain of Corruption, 2 Kings xxiii. 13. Josephus says, it is five stadia (or furlongs) from Jerusalem. Luke says, a sabbath day's journey; that is, about eight turlongs. The mount of Olives has three summits, ranging from north to south; from the middle summit our Saviour ascended into heaven; on the south summit Solomon built temples to his idols; the north summit is distant two furlougs from the middlemost. This 'is the highest, and is commonly called Galilee, or Viri Gaidai, from the expression used by the angels, 'ye men of Galilee.' In the time of king Uzziah, the mou. t of Olives was so shattered by an earthquake, that half the earth on the western side fell, and rolled four furlongs, or five hundred paces, toward the opposite mountain on the east; so that the earth blocked up the highways, and covered the king's gardens. Though this mount was named from its olive-trees, yet it abounded in other trees also. It was a station for signals, which were communicated from hence by lights

His last charge to them was, to secure with every token of humiliation, tears by to send him speedy intelligence of formation that Ahithophel had deserted

> and flames, on various occasions. They were made of long staves of cedar, canes, pinewood, with coarse flax, which, while on fire, were shaken about till they were answered from other signals. The names of the various districts of this mount deserve attention, as, (1.) Geth-semane, the place of oil-presses; (2.) Bethany, the house of dates; (3.) Bethphage, the house of green figs, and pro-(3.) Bething, the house of green ags, and probably, other names in different places. The Talmudists say, that on mount Olivet were shops, kept by the children of Canaan, of which shops some were in Bethany; and that under two large cedars which stood there, were four shops, where things necessary for purification were constantly on sale, such as doves or pigeons for the women, &c. Probably, these shops were supplied by country persons, who hereby avoided paying rent for their sittings in the temple. The mention of these residences implies that this mount had va-rious dwellings upon it. There was also a collection of water at Bethany, on this mount; which was by some used as a place of purification. The small building, erected over the place of ascension, is contiguous to a Turkish mosque, and is in possession of the Turks, who show it for profit; and subject the Christians to an annual contribution for permission to officiate within it on ascension day. From the mosque is a fine and commanding view of Jerusalem, mount Sion, and the Dead sea. Dr Clarke found on the top of the mount of Olives a vast and very ancient crypt, in "the shape of a cone, of immense size; the vertex alone appear-ing level with the soil, and exhibiting by its section at the top a small circular aperture; the sides extending below to a great depth, lined with a hard red stucco." He thinks it to have been an idolatrous construction, perhaps as old as Solomon, and profaned by Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 13. The number of crypts about Jerusalem is well deserving attention. If Solomon built this crypt, he might, as the Jews say he did, construct one of the same kind for the reception of the ark, &c. in case of danger: but this must continue undecided. till the 'times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.' "So commanding is the view of Jerusalem afforded in this situation, (says Dr Clarke,) that the eye roams over all the streets, and around the walls, as if in the survey of a plan or model of the city. The most conspicuous object is the mosque, erected upon the site and foundations of the temple of Solomon." Hence the observation of the evangelist, (Luke xix. 37.) that Jesus 'beheld the city, and wept over it, acquires additional force. "Towards the south appears the lake Asphaltites, a noble expanse of water, seeming to be within a short ride from the city; but the real distance is much greater. Lofty mountains inclose it with prodigious grandeur. To the north are seen the verdant and fertile pastures of the plain of Jericho, watered by the Jordan, whose course may be distinctly discerned."- Calmet.

proving to David one of the most affecting circumstances that had befallen him, he prayed to God to infatuate him, and to turn his wisdom into foolishness. He was a clear-sighted man, and of great penetration, and there was nothing David so much dreaded as the policy of his counsels.

When he had gained the mountain top, he looked back upon the city, shedding tears, and uttering ejaculations, as one that was now taking his last leave of his government.

In this state of perplexity, he casually met his tried friend and faithful subject Hushai, with his garments torn, and ashes upon his head, lamenting the transitory state of all things below the sun. David bade him be of good cheer, and bear the present calamity with resignation and patience; and urged him finally, with great earnestness, to go back again to Jerusalem, where he might behave himself like one of Absalom's party; pry into his counsels and designs, and by thwarting Ahithophel's measures, do his master infinitely better service, than by staying with him.

Hushai yielded to his persuasions; and so taking his leave of David, returned to Jerusalem, Absalom himself coming thither not long after.

David in the mean while going forward, met with Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, to whom he had committed the management of the estate he had bestowed upon the son of his dear friend Jonathan. He was driving two asses before him, and offered David and his men to take what they pleased of what he had, if there was any thing they liked.

The question was put to Ziba upon this occasion, 'What was become of his master?' he answered, 'He left him at Jerusalem, in hopes that upon the present distracted state of affairs, the people, in honour to the memory of his father Saul, might be prevailed upon to choose him king.' David, justly incensed at so flagrant

an instance of ingratitude, resumed his grant of the lands made to Mephibosheth, and bestowed them on Ziba, as the more deserving person of the two. This was a token of favour and bounty very acceptable to Ziba.

BOOK IV

As the king proceeded in his march, and approached Bahurim, there came out of that place a kinsman of Saul's whose name was Shimei,* the son of Gera, and assaulted him with curses and with stones, and threw dust at him,† and the more

* Whether this man had been a personal sufferer in the fall of Saul's family, or what else had exasperated him against David, it no where appears; but it seems as if he had conceived some very heinous offence against him, when neither the presence of a king, nor the terror of his guards, could restrain him from throwing stones, and uttering bitter speeches against him: and it looks as if the king were fallen into the utmost contempt, when one private man could think of venting his malice at him, in so gross a manner, with impunity.—

Howell's History.

+ In almost every part of Asia, those who demand justice against a criminal throw dust upon him, signifying that he deserves to lose his life, and be cast into the grave; and that this is the true interpretation of the action, is evident from an imprecation in common use among the Turks and Persians, Be covered with earth; Earth be upon thy head. We have two remarkable instances of casting dust mentioned in scripture; the first is that here recorded of Shimei, who gave vent to his secret hostility to David, when he fled before his rebellious son, by throwing stones at him, and casting dust. It was an ancient custom, in those warm and arid countries, to lay the dust before a person of distinction, and particularly before kings and princes, by sprinkling the ground with water. To throw dust into the air while a person was passing, was therefore an act of great disrespect; to do so before a sovereign prince, an indecent outrage. But it is clear from the explanation of the custom, that Shimei meant more than disrespect and outrage to an afflicted king, whose subject he was; he intended to signify by that action, that David was unfit to live, and that the time was at last arrived to offer him a sacrifice to the ambi-tion and vengeance of the house of Saul. This view of his conduct is confirmed by the behaviour of the Jews to the apostle Paul, when they seized him in the temple, and had nearly succeeded in putting him to death; they cried out " Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live; and as they cried out and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle." A great similarity appears between the conduct of the Jews on this occasion and the behaviour of the peasants in Persia, when they go to court to complain of the governors, whose oppres-

David's friends took his part on the one river Jordan, where David mustered and side, the more foul and scandalous were the reproaches of Shimei on the other. He reviled David with being a delighter in blood, and the cause of all their miseries, and bade him depart out of the country, like an insolent, execrable wretch; giving God thanks for that retaliation upon him, by his son, for the indignities that he had formerly put upon his lord and father.

These rude and barbarous outrages provoked the indignation of all that heard them; and Abishai had certainly killed him for it, if David had not interposed, and prevented it, by thus addressing him: "Pray, hold your hand, and do not add mischief to mischief. Things are bad enough already, and do not make them worse. I look upon the clamours of this clown, as I do upon the bawling of a mad dog, that God had let loose upon me; and his holy will be done. Why should you wonder at the unmannerly revilings of a scoundrel, when at the same time I am worse treated by my own ungracious son? But there is a merciful God above, who in the end will deliver the innocent out of the hands of the oppressors, and give us victory over all our enemies; wherefore in the name, and under the protection of that God, let us proceed forward on our journey."

As David advanced coolly, on one side of the mountain, Shimei ran railing and cursing over-against him on the other.

After a long and wearisome march, they arrived at length at the bank of the

sions they can no longer endure. They carry their complaints against their governors by companies, consisting of several hundreds, and sometimes of a thousand; they repair to that gate of the palace nearest to which their prince is most likely to be, where they set themselves to make the most horrid cries, tearing their garments, and throwing dust into the air, at the same time de-manding justice. The king, upon hearing these cries, sends to know the occasion of them; the people deliver their complaints in writing, upon which he lets them know that he will commit the cognisance of the affair to such an one as he names; in consequence of this, justice is usually obtained .- Paxton's Script. Illust.

refreshed his troops.

Absalom, and his great counsellor Ahithophel, were by this time come to Jerusalem, where they were received with shouts and acclamations by a vast concourse or people; and among the rest, by David's friend Hushai, who, together with the people, exclaimed, 'God save the king,' wishing him a long and happy reign.

Absalom, upon this encounter, asked Hushai, how it came to pass, that he who was esteemed so eminent and faithful a servant to his father, should now desert his former master, and come over to him.

Hushai answered him discreetly, thus: "There is no contending with the will of God, and the consent of the people; and so long as you have them on your side, you may be sure of my fidelity. It is from God that you have received your kingdom; and if you can think me worthy of a place in the number of those you will vouchsafe to own, you shall find me as true to you as ever I was to your father. No man is to account the present state of things grievous, so long as the government continues in the same line, and a son of the same family succeeds to the throne." These words of Hushai to Absalom put an end to all jealousies.

The most material business now to be pursued was, to determine on the next step, and Ahithophel was called in to advise about it. The counsel he gave was, for Absalom to go in and lie with his father's concubines; enforcing his advice by observing, "This would fix the people, and make them so much the bolder and firmer to the present state, when they should see the breach advanced beyond all possibility of reconciliation; for as matters now stand, people would be apt to say, Why, the father and the son may come to an agreement for ought we know; and if they should chance to adjust differences in the conclusion, where are we? so that it would be dangerous to declare under such uncertainty."

Absalom, in short, took Ahithophel's your judgment, betwixt the consternation would befall David.

Having proceeded agreeably to Ahithophel's plan, the next point under consideration was, how they should proceed in the prosecution of the war? His answer was this, "That if they would but put him at the head of twelve thousand chosen men, he would undertake therewith to destroy David, and secure the public peace to the people, and the government to Absalom both at one stroke."

Absalom was much of Ahithophel's opinion; but willing however to have Hushai's also, he demanded his advice upon the case.

Hushai, who was David's true friend, and ever so reputed, finding the advice to be shrewd and dangerous, did what he could to divert Absalom from it, by giving his judgment another way, after this manner:

"Sir, I need not tell you that your father is a valiant man, and that he hath a great many brave men about him, with whom, in all encounters he hath ever come off victorious. You know him to be a soldier too, and a man of stratagem. as well as of courage. He will most infallibly have advice of our approach; and in some valley, wood, or behind some rock, perhaps, lie ready to betray us into an ambush. Or suppose we should attempt to engage them, they will order the matter so as to manage their retreat by little and little, till they have drawn us into the snare, when David's whole body will fall upon us before we know where we are.* Now I submit myself to

counsel, and commanded his servants to it will cause on the one hand, and the erect him a tent in the palace, where he encouragement it will give on the other, lay with his father's concubines in the what a confusion this way of proceeding sight of the people. This was according will create among us. And now you to what the prophet Nathan foretold have heard both opinions, you may follow either Ahithophel's or mine, which appears most reasonable."

> Having given thus far what was not to be done, he craved leave to observe what he thought advisable under these circumstances to be done.

> "Let the whole nation of the Israelites," he said, "be summoned to appear, with all their troops, at some certain time and place, to make war against David. And when they are met, do you yourself," addressing himself to Absalom, "take the command of the whole into your own hand, without trusting to deputies. When this is done, David must either expose himself in the plain field, or fly to some strong

> a very fierce creature; but she-bears (as Aristotle tells us) are more fierce than the male, particularly when they have young ones, but most of all when these young ones are taken from them. When she returns to her den, and misses the objects of her love and care, she becomes almost frantic with rage. Disregarding every consideration of danger to herself, she attacks, with intense ferocity, every animal that comes in her way, and in the bitterness of her heart, will dare to attack even a band of armed men. The Russians of Kamtchatka never venture to fire on a young bear when the mother is near; for, if the cub drop, she becomes enraged to a degree little short of madness; and if she get sight of the enemy, will only quit her revenge with her life. A more desperate attempt, therefore, can scarcely be performed, than to carry off her young in her absence. The moment she returns, and misses them, her passions are inflamed; her scent enables her to track the plunderer; and unless he has reached some place of safety before the infuriated animal overtake him, his only safety is in dropping one of the cubs, and continuing to flee; for the mother, attentive to its safety, carries it home to her den before she renews the pursuit. For this reason the scripture makes frequent use of this similitude: 'I will be unto them as a lion,' says God, in relation to the people of Israel, 'and as a leopard by the way; I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their hearts. So that the purport of Hushai's advice is founded on this maxim, that we should not drive an enemy to despair, nor attack those who are resolved to sell their lives at as dear a rate as possible."- Calmet's commentary, &c.

There is something very plausible, and elegant too, in the advice, which Hushni gives Absalom, not immediately to pursue, and fall upon David. The text reads thus: Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps,' 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Every one knows, that a bear is

holds, or walled towns. If he keeps the plain, his forces are so few and inconsiderable, compared to the many thousands in Israel, wholly devoted to your interest, who will value themselves upon an opportunity being offered them to exert their zeal in serving their prince and country, that your power and strength being hereby so much superior to his, you are sure of obtaining an easy conquest over him. Or if he shall go the other way to work, of hiding and skulking up and down, to keep upon the defensive, there are twenty ways, by mining, battering, starving, and the like, that will certainly reduce him."

This advice was generally applauded, insomuch that Absalom preferred it to the counsel of Ahithophel, and the event proved that the interposing hand of an all-wise Providence had great concern in it.

Hushai having brought matters to this issue, hastened with all possible speed to the high-priests Zadok and Abiathar; with an account of what had passed at the council betwixt Ahithophel and himself, and how things were carried; desiring them to despatch an express immediately to David, with a caution by all means to pass the river Jordan that very night, for if his son should either get intelligence where he was, or change his mind, he might fall in upon him before he could get over.

The high-priests had lodged their sons, for the sake of convenience, out of the town, as well as provided a trusty maidservant, to carry them the intelligence, which they were to transmit forthwith to David. Upon the receipt of this information they made what haste they could with it, as became dutiful and faithful servants. But by the time they were advanced about a quarter of a mile upon their way, they were discovered by certain horsemen; and Absalom having notice of it, gave order immediately for the taking of them up.

their danger, and so turned out of the way towards Bahurim, a small village near Jerusalem, where they met with a woman who was so charitable as to conceal them, by letting them down into a well, and throwing some skins of beasts over the mouth of it.

Although they were concealed with much art and expedition, the pursuers came up to the house, and examined the woman very strictly whether she had seen any such men or not. She acknowledged that two such men drank at the gate just before and then went their way, assuring them moreover, that if they made haste after them they might easily be overtaken.

When they had searched up and down a long time after them to no purpose, they returned to their quarters with their labour for their pains.

As soon as the woman saw that all was safe, and the coast clear, she drew the young men out of the well, and they proceeded on their journey time enough to give David a seasonable account of Absalom's design. It was late before they got thither, but David however got his people over the river the same night.

Ahithophel was much piqued that Absalom should reject his counsel, and at the same time embrace Hushai's: so that he mounted his ass, and went home to Galmon, where he called his family together, and told them the advice he had given Absalom, but that he would not follow it; and that in a short time that refusal would be his ruin; for David would certainly get the better of him, and soon after recover his kingdom.

This conduct was followed by this de claration, "Now, it is more honourable for me to die with resolution like a man of honour, than to wait sneaking till David returns, and then to be put to death at last for the services I have done the son against the father."

Having thus spoken, he withdrew into The messengers were quickly aware of a private apartment in his house, agitated scious of his unjust and wicked behaviour in espousing the impious claim of a rebellious son against the equitable government of a pious and indulgent father.

David having now passed the river Jordan, came to Mahanaim, the fairest and strongest city in that tract of land; where he was treated by the principal persons of the whole country with the highest instances of generosity and good-will, partly out of humanity, with regard to the necessities of his present condition, and partly out of reverence, in the memory of his former state.

There was Shobi, a prince of Ammon; Barzillai and Machir, two principal men of Gilead, &c., these generous persons took such care of David and his people, and provided for them all that could possibly minister to their comfort and refreshment, after an anxious state of mind and toilsome adventure.

Absalom in the mean time had passed the river with a mighty army against his father, and encamped not far from Mahanaim, a town of Gilead, having made his kinsman, Amasa, general, in the place of Joab, Amasa being the son of Ithra by Abigail. Now Abigail, and Zeruiah, the mother of Joab, were sisters.

King David having reviewed his forces, found he mustered no more than four

with grief, and hanged himself,*-con- thousand strong; but, notwithstanding the smallness of his number, he determined, by the strength and favour of the Almighty, to attack his insolent and impious son, esteeming such resolution preferable to a lame inactivity, that might furnish him with an opportunity of making an assault.

Thus resolved, he appointed his officers their respective departments, and divided the little body of his army into three parts. Joab had the first division; Abishai the second; and his old friend Ittai the Gittite + the third.

David would have gone himself in person; but his friends, for very good reasons, opposed it: for, said they, "should we be beaten, and you yourself in the field, the whole cause would be lost without any resource. But otherwise, if one division should have the ill-hap to be worsted, the rest might repair to himself, and be empowered thereby to reinforce themselves to make another sally on the enemy. Beside, the king's not being upon the spot, would possess the enemy with an apprehension that he had another body of troops in reserve."

This motion was carried, and the king was prevailed upon to stay at Mahanaim. David then abjured his friends by all the rites of honour, gratitude, and conscience, to acquit themselves in their duty; and in case God should give them a victory,

^{*} It has been asked, what motive could induce a privy counsellor of David, who was held in such high consideration, to enter into Absalom's conspiracy? The pride of overturning a throne, of which he was the support, and the hope of reigning himself under the name of Absalom, will, perhaps, account for the conspiracy, but not for the incest which he advised Absalom to commit. thophel was the father of Eliam the father of Bathsheba, and there is every reason to think that he wished to revenge his grand-daughter; particularly when we consider the infamous advice which he gave, his eagerness for pursuing David, and the desire he expressed to smite the king himself. His suicide was as deliberate as his hatred: he was one of those men who are as useful friends as they are dangerous enemies, equally able in good and evil, who employ their talents in the service of their passions, do nothing by halves, and are models of guilt or of virtue.—Horne.

[†] In 2 Sam. xv. 18. we read, that 'all the Gittites, six hundred men, which came after him,' viz. David, 'from Gath, passed on before the king;' but who those Gittites were it is hard to determine, because we have no mention made of them in any other part of scripture. Some imagine that they were natives of Gath, who, taken with the fame of David's piety and happy successes, came along with Ittai, whom the Jews suppose to have been the son of Achish, king of Gath, and being proselyted to the Jewish religion, became part of David's guard, and attended him in his wars. But others rather think, that they were men of Jewish extraction, but had this additional name, from their fleeing unto David, probably under the conduct of Ittai, while he was at Gath, and accompanying him ever after, not only in the time of Saul's persecution of him, but even after his accession to the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel .- Patrick's Commentary.

to spare the life of the young man; for he durst not trust himself with his own life after the death of Absalom. David's address was followed with a thousand blessings and good wishes; and then he despatched them to the army.

When Absalom saw that Joab had drawn up his division upon a plain, with the wood of Ephraim * at his back, he disposed of his own troops likewise into the same form over against the other. The engagement soon commenced, and there was great bravery on both sides. One part contending for the recovery of what David had lost, and the other for the defence and maintenance of what Absalom had got, they appeared to fight with equal courage and resolution, being equally intent on carrying their point. Absalom's men fought some time upon a point of honour and to avoid the infamy of being worsted by so inconsiderable a party; David's men, on the other hand, for the glory of routing so many thousands of the enemy upon such a disproportion.

In the conclusion David's veterans behaved bravely, and like themselves; for they broke the enemy's order and put them to a total rout, getting the chase of them over woods, mountains, and crags, whithersoever they fled: some they killed; some they took; and more were lost in the pursuit than in the battle. Near twenty thousand men were reputed to be slain in that day's action.†

* So called here, because, as some think, the Ephraimites drove their cattle over Jordan, to feed them in the wood. But it most probably had this name from the great slaughter of the Ephraimites by Lephthah

Now Absalom was so remarkable both for his beauty and his stature, that he was every body's mark; so that for fear of being taken alive, he mounted the fleetest mule he could procure, and fled away as fast as possible. By the celerity of the mule's course, the force of the wind blew up his hair, so that it caught hold on the rugged bough of a tree;‡ and the mule

themselves to the wood for refuge, their pursuers made a greater slaughter of them there than they otherwise would have done, because they could not run away so fast in the wood, as they might have done in the open field. Paxton supposes the wood of Ephraim to have been a morass covered with trees and bushes, like the haunts of the wild boar near the banks of Jordan; and adds: "It is certain that such a place has more than once proved fatal to contending armies, partly by suffocating those who in the hurry of flight inadvertently venture over places incapable of supporting them, and partly by retarding them till their pursuers come up and cut them to pieces. In this manner a greater number of men than fell in the heat of battle may be destroyed. The archbishop of Tyre informs us, that one of the Christian kings of Jerusalem lost some of his troops in a marshy vale of this country, from their ignorance of the paths which lead through it, although he had no enemy to molest his march. The number of those who died was small; but in what numbers would they have perished, may we suppose, had they been forced to flee, like the men of Absalom, before a victorious and exasperated enemy? Lewis II., king of Hungary, lost his life in a bog in his own kingdom, in the sixteenth century: and according to Zozimus, Decius the Roman emperor perished in a fen, with his whole army. It may therefore be justly concluded, that Absalom's army perished neither by the trees of the wood, like their guilty leader, nor by the wild beasts which occupied its recesses; but by the deceitful quagmires with which it abounded."-See Pa-

trick's Commentary and Paxton's Script. Illust.

The words in the text, indeed, make no mention of Absalom's hair in this place: they only inform us, that 'Absalom rode upon a mule, and that mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule that was under him went away.' From whence some infer, that the meaning of the historian is, not that Absalom hung by his hair, but that his neck was so wedged between the boughs, by the swift motion of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. For it is hardly to be questioned, say they, but that, when he went to battle, he had an helmet on; and an helmet, which covered his head, would have hindered his hair from being entangled in the boughs: but it is only supposing, either that his helmet was such as left a great deal of his hair visible and uncovered, or that, if it was large enough to inclose the whole, he might, upon this occasion, throw it off.

by Jephthah.

† The sacred historian informs us that 'The wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured,' which some think was occasioned by their falling into pits, pressing one another to death in strait places, creeping into lurking holes, and there being starved to death, or otherwise devoured by wild beasts, which met them in their flight: but the most easy and simple meaning of the passage is, that there were more slain in the wood than in the field of battle. The field of battle, as Josephus tells us, was a plain, with a wood contiguous to it; and therefore, when Absalom's army was put to the rout, and betook

running forward from under him, left him sent, took down the body from the tree, him, and he should have ten shekels of in a civil war. silver, and a girdle,* for his pains. But Absalom had already erected a marble do such a thing to the son of my lord and master for a thousand shekels; especially considering the charge the king gave in your hearing, not to touch the life of the young man."

Joab hereupon commanded him to conduct him to the place where he saw him hanging; whither when he came he pierced him through the heart with his javelin.+

His armour-bearers that were then pre-

(as well as his other heavy armour) to make himself lighter, and expedite his flight; and then there will be no incongruity in the common, and received opinion, to which the authority of Josephus adds some confirmation, namely, "that, as Absalom was making his escape, upon the whiffling of the air, a snagged bough of a tree took hold of his hair, and the mule, running forward from under him, left him daugling in the air."—Jewish

Antig. b. vii. c. 9.

* A girdle curiously and richly wrought was among the ancient Hebrews a mark of honour, and sometimes bestowed as a reward of merit; for this was the recompense which Joab here declared he meant to bestow on the man who put Absalom to death. The reward was certainly meant to correspond with the importance of the service which he expected him to perform, and the dignity of his own station as commander in chief: we may, therefore, suppose it was not a common one of leather, or plain worsted, but of costly materials and richly adorned; for people of rank and fashion in the East wear very broad girdles, all of silk, and superbly ornamented with gold and silver, and precious stones, of which they are extremely proud, regarding them as the token of their superior station, and the proof of their riches .- Pax-

+ Joab knew that there could be no safety to the king, nor peace to the kingdom, no security to himself, or other loyal subjects, as long as Absalom lived. Looking, therefore, upon the charge, to spare Absalom as an order more proper for a parent than a prince, he adventured to disobey it; and as Absalom had forfeited his life to the laws upon several accounts, it was but justice now to take this opportunity of despatching him, as an enemy to his king and country.

suspended in the air, and continued her and cast it into a deep pit, piling a great speed, as if she had her rider still upon her heap of stones upon it, in the form of a back. One of David's soldiers saw this, sepulchre. This being done, Joab soundand carried the tidings thereof to Joab, ed a retreat to take his men off from the who bade him go quickly and despatch chase, and save the effusion of more blood

the soldier bravely replied, "I would not column, with an inscription upon it, in a place called the King's Valley, about two furlongs from Jerusalem, which he called by the name of the Hand of Absalom, to perpetuate his memory, as he said, even if he should leave no children behind him.

> He had three sons, and one daughter who was married to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, by whom he had Abijah, his immediate successor.

In the description of the Holy Land, some geographers tell us, that this heap of stones re-mained even to their days, and that all travellers, as they passed by it, were wont to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father. For, though it became a custom among the Greeks to raise a heap of stones in the place where any great person was interred, as a monument of honour and respect; yet it is plain, that none of David's army intended any honour to Absalom's memory in accumulating stones upon him, nor can we think that David himself (though too fond of this rebel-son) made any alteration afterwards in the form of his burial. for fear of enraging the people against him. Some, however, are of a quite contrary opinion, namely, that David, who lamented him with such excess, removed him from this pit, in order to have him laid in the sepulchre belonging to the kings, or perhaps somewhere about the place where the monument, which goes under his name, and even to this day is shown to travellers, was dug in a rock. It is a little chamber, wrought with a chisel, out of one piece of rock, which stands at some distance from the rest of the mountain, and is a square of eight paces from out to The inside of this chamber is all plain, but the outside is adorned with some pilasters of the same kind of stone. The upper part, or covering, is made in the form of a conical pyramid, pretty high and large, with a kind of flower-pot on its top. The pyramid is composed of several stones, but the monument itself is square, and all cut out of one block. In the time of Jesephus, the monu-ment, which was said to be Absalom's, was no-thing more than one marble pillar, widely different from what at present goes under his name, and which therefore must be accounted a more modern building .- Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF ABSALOM TO THE DEATH OF JEHOSHAPHAT.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In this division of our history we have related the latter part of David's life; his death, and the accession of Solomon, whose reign comprehended the most prosperous and glorious period of the Israelitish history, and prefigured the peaceful reign of the Messiah: Solomon's erection and consecration of the temple at Jerusalem; his awful defection from the true religion; the sudden decay of the Jewish nation after his death, when it was divided into two kingdoms,-under Rehoboam, who reigned over the kingdom of Judah and Benjamin, -and under Jeroboam, who was sovereign of the ten tribes that revolted from the house of David, which in the sacred writings are designated as the kingdom of Israel. We have likewise the reigns of Rehoboam's successors, Abijam, Asa, and Jehoshaphat; and those of Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Tibni, the wicked Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram, (in part) who succeeded Jeroboam in the throne of Israel.

The causes of the revolution in the commencement of Rehoboam's reign, may, as in all similar commotions, be traced to anterior events: the impolicy of that monarch was only the immediate occasion history of the Hebrews, we may discern vestiges of hereditary jealousy, which terminated only in the division of the posterity of Abraham into two distinct nations, one of whom has since disappeared. The limits necessarily assigned to this portion of our work, will only allow us to attempt a rapid sketch of this long series of discord and hatred.

From the very beginning of the Israelitish nation, the two tribes of Judah and Ephraim had disputed for the pre-eminency. The former, whose glory had been predicted by the dying patriarch Jacob, flourished in the number of its families, as well as by its power and wealth; being allied to the blood of the Pharaohs during the residence of the Israelites in Egypt, where the two remarkable establishments of Er and of Jokim had been formed, which this tribe carried into Pal-Judah also marched first during the sojourning in the desert, and reckoned upon a dominion which had been promised by so many oracles. The latter, or tribe of Ephraim, depending on the great name of Joseph, and on the right of primogeniture which it had acquired in consequence of being adopted by Jacob, confided in that numerous posterity which had been predicted to it; and became powerful during of it; and in the successive periods of the I the residence in Egypt. One very remark-

able proof, that Ephraim and Judah were | Ephraim: it is not improbable that the the two preponderating tribes, is, that when the land of Canaan was divided, they each received their allotments before the western tribes. As the southern par of the Holy Land, which was apportioned to Judah, proved too large for that tribe, the Simeonites were added to them. Ephraimites on the contrary, and the half tribe of Manasseh, which were sister and neighbouring tribes, pleaded that their allotment was not sufficiently extensive for them; and enlarged it by force of arms, and by cutting down the forests which abounded in the mountainous districts of the land of Canaan.

In this state of things, with such recollections and mutual pretensions, it was impossible that a spirit of rivalry and jealousy should not break forth. tribe of Ephraim was distingushed for its proud, turbulent, and warlike spirit, as is evident not only from the remonstrances addressed by them to Joshua, but also by their discontented murmuring against Gideon, notwithstanding he was of the tribe of Manasseh, and in the civil war with Jephthah in which their envy and hatred were so severely punished. tribe of Judah, on the contrary, more pacific in its temper and more sedentary in its pursuits, appears always to have cherished a coolness towards the northern tribes. It never assisted them in their wars; its name does not occur in the triumphal hymn of Deborah, in which so many others are mentioned; and, what is particularly deserving of attention, it took no part in the exploits of Gideon, although the enemies whom he was going to fight had made incursions as far as Gaza, whither they could not have penetrated without entering on its territory. the men of Judah, also, who were desirous of delivering up Samson, a Danite, to the Philistines. This old grudge subsisted in all its force, when the elevation of Saul, a Benjamite, to the throne of Israel, still further chagrined the proud tribe of

discontent manifested in the assembly of the Israelites at Mizpeh, which induced Samuel to renew the kingdom at Gilgal, was excited by the Ephraimites; and at the very commencement of Saul's reign we observe a census, in which the troops of Judah are reckoned separately from those of Israel. At length the elevation of David completed the mortification of the jealous and envious tribe of Ephraim, and of the northern tribes which ordinarily followed the fortune of so powerful a neighbour; while Simeon and Benjamin, from necessity as well as choice, were more disposed in favour of Judah. David, during the whole of his long-continued flight from Saul, never quitted the territory of Judah and Benjamin, but when he took refuge in a foreign country; and he sent presents only to the cities of his own tribe. On the death of Saul, two thrones arose in Israel; which gave rise to a civil war, that lasted seven years; and, had it not been for the defection of Abner, and the timidity of Ishbosheth, the tribes might never have been united under one sceptre. David himself felt the weakness of his power. The choice of Jerusalem for his capital and for the centre of worship, to the exclusion of Shiloh, a town of Ephraim where the tabernacle and ark had formerly been kept, could not but displease the malecontents, whose pride was wounded by hearing that advantage celebrated in one of the sacred hymns, Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68. During David's reign, the dispute at the passage of the river Jordan showed how a small spark kindled a flame, which Sheba, retiring towards the north, was at hand to excite.

Finally, the erection of the temple, the immoveable sanctuary, which secured the supremacy of the tribe of Judah,—the taxes levied and personal services required by Solomon, who employed them for the most part in the embellishment of Jerusalem,—the little commercial advantage which Ephraim could derive during his

was more commodiously situated for profiting by the transit of commodities between Egypt, Idumæa, and Arabia,—the intrigues of Jeroboam who had been imprudently nominated to the command of the house of Joseph; all these circumstances contributed secretly to mature that revolution, which only awaited his death to break forth, and which the folly of Rehoboam rendered inevitable.*

CHAPTER I.

David lamenteth Absalom .- Pardons Shimei. -Sheba endeavours to prejudice the minds of the people against David .- Joab treacherously slays Amasa, who had been sent against Sheba by David .- The city is saved by the counsel of a wise woman .- A famine inflicted on the Israelites for their former breach of faith with the Gibeonites .- David defeats the Philistines .- Is well nigh slain by them .- Rescued by Abishai. - Encounters the Philistines in various battles with success .- David's champions .- The people punished for David's numbering them .- He is pardoned on repentance. The pestilence stopped. David lays a plan for building the temple.

THE adherents of Absalom, having lost their presumptuous leader, became intimidated, and privately stole away to their respective places of abode. Ahimaaz the son of Zadok the high priest then applied to Joab for permission to go and acquaint the king with the news of the victory obtained over his enemies.

Joab gave him this answer, that it would not look well for him who had been always heretofore the messenger of good news to the king, to be now the first man to tell him of his son's death; and then calling to Cushi, sent him on the errand, and ordered him to tell the king what he himself had seen. Ahimaaz having entreated Joab a second time, to let him carry the tidings only of the victory, but not of the death of Absalom, Joab upon this importunity gave him leave, and he knowing

reign, in comparison of Judah, which tribe | the nearest way better than the other, got thither before him. David was at this time sitting at the gate,+ with longing expectation to know the event of the battle, when a scout brought him word, that he saw onet running that way, but he was too far off to discern who it was.

The king looked upon it as a good omen, and the scout immediately upon this told the king that he discovered another, which gave him still more hope than before.

+ It appears, that the tower in the entrance of Mahanaim had two pair of gates, at some distance from each other; in a small room, which was often found by the side of these fortified gates, the door of which opened into the passage between them, sat the king, waiting in fearful suspense, the issue of the contest, for it cannot be supposed he sat in the passage itself, which had been at once unbecoming his dignity, and incommodious to the passengers entering or leaving the city. We find a watchman stationed on the top of this tower, to which he went up by a staircase from the passage, which, like the roof of their dwelling-houses, was flat, for the purpose of descrying at a distance those that were approaching the place, or repelling the attacks of an enemy. The observations made by the watchman were not communicated by him immediately to the king, but by the intervention of a warder at the outer gate of the tower; and it appears, that a private staircase led from the lower room in which the king was sitting, to the upper room over the gateway; for by that communication he retired to give full vent to his sorrow. The only circumstance involved in any doubt, is in what part of this building he sat, (for it is evident he continued in some part of the gate,) when he returned his thanks to the army, for their exertions in his favour; or in the language of the historian, 'spake to the hearts of his servants, and received their congratulations. It is somewhat uncertain, whether he gave audience to his people in the upper room, where he lamented in strains so affecting the death of Absalom, or in the little chamber between the two gates, where he waited the arrival of the messengers, or in some other part of the building. The ancient custom of sitting in the gate on solemn occasions, rather favours the opinion, that David went down from the apartment above the gate, to the chamber in the side of the passage. This custom, which may be traced to the remotest antiquity, is still observed in the East; for when Pococke returned from viewing the town of ancient Byblus, the sheik and the elders were sitting in the gate of the city, after the manner of their ancestors .- Paxton.

† This was a token that the messenger brought good tidings, and his party were employed in pur-suit of the enemy; for if his party had been worst-ed, those that fled would have come in crowds to

the city for refuge.

^{*} See Horne's Introd. vol. iii. p. 99-101. and vol. iv. p. 53.

The messenger being now come within distance, was found to be Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the high-priest, who came first. This encouraged the king, who exclaimed, "This is the man that most certainly brings me good tidings." The words were hardly uttered, when Ahimaaz cast himself at David's feet to do him reverence, and asked him, "What news from the army!" he replied, "Great success and victory."

David then asked him, "What was become of Absalom?" Ahimaaz answered, that as soon as ever he saw the enemy routed, he came away with the intelligence; but that he heard a mighty clamour and shouting all the while, upon the pursuit of Absalom; and Joab sent him away in such haste, that his orders were only to carry the news of the victory, without any mention of Absalom. By this time Cushi was at the king's feet, with the tidings of a victory; and the king putting the same question to him as to the other, namely, "What was become of Absalom?" "May it be," says Cushi, "with all the enemies of my lord the king as it is with Absalom." These words turned a day of joy and triumph into a day of mourning. It proved so to the king, for the loss of Absalom: and to the people also; for David withdrew himself upon it out of sight, to the top of one of the highest turrets about the city, beating his breast, and tearing his hair, with cries and exclamations, "Ah my son Absalom, my son Absalom! Oh that I myself could have but died for thee. my son !" David was by nature extreme-

The messenger being now come within stance, was found to be Ahimaaz, the n of Zadok the high-priest, who came st. This encouraged the king, who ex-

As the king had discovered these tokens of grief, Joab and his victorious army were discouraged from entering the town in a joyous and triumphant manner; and therefore when they approached, hanged down their heads, assumed dejected countenances, and appeared more like men conquered, than conquerors.

David continued so long in this abandoned dejection, that Joab without ceremony broke in upon him in the very agony of his passion, reasoning and expostulating with him in this manner: "Sir, do you know what you do? are you aware of the dishonour you bring upon yourself by this wilful and effeminate lamentation? It makes you look as if you hated your friends, that have saved your life at the hazard of their own; nay, for yourself and your family too; and at the same time cherished a kindness even for those of your enemies, which divine justice hath taken away in your favour, by the stroke of a most righteous vengeance. If Absalom had carried the day, and settled himself in his usurpation, who would have bemoaned either your fate or ours? For we would have most certainly been cut to pieces, every living soul: nay, you yourself and your children would have fallen the first victims to their cruelty; then your enemies would have rejoiced and gloried in your ruin, and it would have

fligate than ever; triumphed in his good success; insulted and persecuted all his father's friends; and proved a wicked and abominable tyrant. But whether David's wish was deliberate or not, it is certain that his grief might be increased from this reflection, that himself, by his own sin in the case of Uriah, had been the unhappy instrument and occasion of his son's death; though some learned men have observed, that the oriental people were accustomed to express their passions with more vehemence than we in these parts of the world are wont to do, and that the repetition of the same word, 'My son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son,' is a style proper for mountful lamentations.—

Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

^{*} Nothing certainly can be more moving and pathetic than the words which David utters upon this sad occasion; but whether it was David's deliberate wish that he had died in Absalom's stead, or only the effect of his excessive love and grief for him, is not so easy a matter to determine. St Austin seems to be on the affirmative side, and gives this reason for it:—that Absalom died impenitent, but might have lived to become a better man; whereas, if David had died, he had reason to hope well of his salvation: but this supposition (as I take it) is not so well founded, since there is much more probability that if Absalom had survived his father, he would have grown more pro-

been death for any man to have but so much as pitied us. Does not your conscience as well as your honour check you for this unmanly tenderness, for the memory of so implacable an enemy. He was your son, it is true, but a most ungracious one; and you cannot be just to God's providence, without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Assume then a cheerful countenance, show yourself to your people, and tell them, that it is to their loyalty and bravery, (under God,) that you are indebted for the honour of this day; for if you go on as you have begun, I will infallibly cause your kingdom and your army to reject you, and place another on the throne; and then you will find a more real and sensible cause for such grievous affliction."

The conduct of Joab, though bold and resolute, reduced David to some degree of reason, insomuch that he began once more to direct his attention to business of state and the concerns of the people committed to his care, showing himself in public as usual, and assuming a more placid and satisfied aspect. This change of humour wrought so effectually upon the people, that they came in multitudes from all parts to pay him their reverence.

The face of things being thus changed, Absalom's men that fled from the late battle, and were got home again, sent messengers up and down, from place to place, to remind their friends of the infinite obligations they lay under to David upon all accounts, and particularly for the toils and hazards he had undergone in his own person, for the vindication of their liberty; how ungratefully they had behaved themselves in their revolt, and that they had nothing more to do now, than to lay themselves at his feet, beg his pardon, and beseech him once again to receive them into his care and protection, as formerly; especially as the person was now no more whom they had most unjustly and injuriously set up in his stead. The king had addresses of this kind sent him in abundance, which he still communicated by letters to the high-priests Zadok and Abiathar, with certain hints, how they were to manage the heads of the tribe of Judah toward his restoration. They insinuated accordingly, how shameful it would be for them to stand looking on, and let others go before them, in doing a common right to a prince so generous, and of their own tribe and extraction.

This way of proceeding created an emulation among them who should be foremost.

They were likewise to expostulate on the cause with Amasa, the enemy's general, wherefore he himself, the nephew of David by his own sister, should not dispose the army to a sense of their duty. and the restoring of the government to the right owner.

They told Amasa, that for what was past he might be sure of his pardon; and that they doubted not but he might have the same command under David that he had under Absalom.

In this manner the high-priests proceeded towards the heads of each tribe, and by this means brought over Amasa to the interest of David.

The tribe of Judah were the first that sent their commissioners to invite the king back to the exercise of his government; and betwixt the influence of this example, and the credit of Amasa, they were all to attend, and receive the king at Jerusalem.

The tribe of Judah were remarkably the forwardest of the whole body, and the most officious in their respects; for they went to the very bank of the river Jordan to meet him.

There was Shimei, the son of Gera, at the head of a thousand Benjamites.*

^{*} The reason why Shimei came with so large a retinue, was, to let David see that he was a man of some considerable rank, and capable of doing him great service among the people, which

There was also Ziba, Saul's freeman, and his fifteen children, and twenty servants: who, together with the tribe of Judah, laid a bridge over the river for the more commodious passage of David and his troops.

Upon his coming to the river, the tribe of Judah were the first that saluted him; and Shimei, advancing to the bridge, threw himself at David's feet, begging his pardon for the indignities he had put upon him; beseeching him to pass it all over, and that it might never rise in judgment against him when he should be reinstated in his kingdom; desiring, moreover, that his early repentance and return to his allegiance might atone for his past faults.

Shimei, on this application, was thus accosted by Abishai, Joab's brother: "And do you think to come off so easily; you that could have the face to blaspheme the king that God had set over you at so unpardonable a rate?" But David checked his intemperate zeal with these words: "Be silent, you sons of Zeruiah, without blowing the coal, and stirring up new broils; for I would have you look upon this as the first day of my reign; and take notice of what I do now declare upon my oath. I do freely forgive all the world, and I do promise that no person shall suffer for any thing done against me, or against any body else for my sake, of what kind or quality soever; so that you may set your heart at rest. Shimei, your life is in no danger." Upon this assurance he made his reverence and went his way.

After him came Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, with as forlorn and miserable an aspect as can be conceived; for upon the king's being forced away from the palace, this good man, reckoning the king's calamity as his own, bound himself by a

might be some inducement to the king to grant him his pardon; or, very likely, he was one of the 'captains of a thousand in his own tribe,' and might carry them all along with him, to make the stronger intercession for his pardon.—Poole's Annotations.

vow never to cut his hair, wash his feet, or change his clothes, till it might please God to restore him.*

Ziba took this opportunity of traducing his master to the king; for upon David's asking Mephibosheth how he came to leave him when he was under persecution, he laid the fault upon Ziba, for not only not obeying his orders, but on the contrary, treating him like a slave, notwithstanding the express charge he had given him to have all necessaries in readiness for his journey.

Mephibosheth thus represented the true state of the case: "If I had the use of my legs, as other people have, this should not have hindered me neither. Nay," farther adding, "and which is more, he has not only disappointed me in the exercise of my duty, but I perceive he has done me spiteful offices, and aspersed my character to yourself; but you are so just, and so great a lover of God, and of truth, that I am sure your generosity and wisdom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice. Our family have had the experience of your piety, modesty, and goodness, to a degree never to be forgotten, in passing over and pardoning the innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed to in the days and by the contrivance of my grandfather: when all our lives were forfeited, and in

^{*} These were some of the instances wherein the Jews were wont to express their mourning; and they seem to be here mentioned as an evidence of the falsehood of Ziba's information against his master, since no one who neglected himself to such a degree would be suspected of aspiring to the crown. 'Not dressing his feet,' may signify either not cutting his nails, or his not washing his ret, which the Jews used frequently to do, because of the bad smell which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians, and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. 'Not trimming his beard,' was letting the hair grow negligently and without any order; for the manner of the Jews was to cut the hair from the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek, but what was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, that they suffered to grow. And 'not changing his clothes,' must denote his not putting on any clean linen, but wearing the same garments all the while.

your power and at your mercy; but then after all the gracious tenderness, your superadding the honour of taking me to your table, as a friend, and as a guest; and likewise a person so obnoxious, in regard of my relations, nothing could be either greater, or more obliging."

David heard all this without either animadverting upon Mephibosheth, or putting Ziba's credit to the test; but he told him, that having given the whole estate to Ziba, he would order him the one half of it back again.* Mephibosheth replied, "Nay, Sir, so long as I have the satisfaction of seeing my lord the king upon his throne again, even let Ziba take the whole."

Barzillai the Gileadite, a man of real honour and true valour, who during the late war had signalised himself in the service of his king and country, insisted on accompanying David in his way to the river Jordan.

The king pressed him with great earnestness to go through with him to Jerusalem, promising that he would be as good as a father to him, and that he should want nothing that might be a relief and refreshment to his old age.

* At first, David gave the land of Saul to Mephibosheth; and Ziba, his sons, and his servants, were to work that land; and to Mephibosheth, as the lord, he was to give the half of the produce. Ziba met David in his distress with provisions, and calumniated Mephibosheth: David, too slightly trusting to his misrepresentation, and supposing that Mephibosheth was actually such a traitor as Ziba represented him, made him on the spot a grant of his master's land. Now he finds that he has acted too rashly, and therefore confirms the former grant; i.e. that Ziba should cultivate the ground, and still continue to give to Mephibosheth, as the lord, the half of the produce. This was merely placing things in statu quo, and utterly annulling the gift that he had made to Ziba. But why did he leave this treacherous man any thing? Answer, 1. He was one of the domestics of Saul, and David wished to show kindness to that house. 2. He had supplied him with the necessaries of life when he was in the greatest distress; and he thinks proper to continue him in his old office, by way of remuneration. But it was certainly too great a compensation for his services, however then important, when all the circumstances are considered.—Dr A. Clarke.

But he excused himself, by alleging, that he should be more at ease in private life than in the splendour and luxury of a palace.

And observing, "He was now eighty years of age, and past the relish of court pleasure; having no other business in the world than to prepare for death, and give orders for his funeral; wherefore he begged his majesty's leave to retire home, where he might live after his usual manner. His taste was now gone, as to the relish of delicious meats and drink, the delights of singing, dancing, revels, harmonious concerts of instruments, voices, and the like. His hearing was impaired, and he had no longer any sense of these entertainments."

The king, by this representation of his case, was prevailed upon to part with him; but upon condition that his son Chimbam went along with him, and took his part in the best offices he could do him.

Barzillai, with all dutiful acknowledgment, left his son with the king. And taking his leave with the most earnest wishes for his long and prosperous reign, returned to his own habitation.

The king proceeded towards Gilgal, attended by the whole tribe of Judah, and one half of the nation of Israel.

On his arrival there came to him several of the chiefs of the country, accompanied by a vast multitude of people, and charged the tribe of Judah for arrogating to themselves too much liberty, in going to the king without consulting their brethren; whereas they ought unanimously to have gone together.

The heads of the tribe of Judah desired the rest not to be incensed at their going before; for they esteemed it a duty incumbent on them for kindred sake so to do. They did not propose any advantage to themselves in being so forward: neither had they given any cause of offence by their expedition to those that came after them. The heads of the other tribes were not at all pleased with this way of reasoning; and demanding of them, "How they came to engross the king to themselves? as if he were not their king likewise;" adding, "that he is by God's providence indifferently the governor of us all; so that we are eleven parts of the whole; and you but one, and consequently valuable in comparison to that proportion; you have certainly done ill in stealing away to the king by yourselves without acquainting us."

While the great men were in hot debate about this affair, Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, a man of a factious and turbulent spirit, stood up, and called out with a loud voice, in the middle of the crowd: "Why talk they to us of a part in David? or what have we to do with

the son of Jesse?"

He then caused the trumpet to be sounded, and issued a proclamation for the people to depart to their tents,—and thereupon a war was proclaimed against David.

The multitude went over to the party and interest of Sheba, saving only the tribe of Judah, who stood by the king, and conducted him to Jerusalem. Immediately on his arrival, he expelled from his palace his concubines which his son Absalom had prostituted in the sight of the people; but he had them provided for elsewhere, though he himself never more had any communication with them.

David made Amasa his general in the place of Joab, giving him orders to assemble what troops he could of the tribe of Judah, and bring them to him in three days, that he might be ready to march out with them against the son of Bichri.

Amasa hasted to obey the royal command; but finding he could not raise an army so soon as he expected, therefore David upon the third day consulted about the affair with Joab, whom he thus addressed: "This business of Sheba is a thing not to be trifled with; wherefore do

you immediately take what forces you have at hand, with the six hundred veterans, without delay; take likewise your brother Abishai with you, and march directly after the son of Bichri; fight him wheresoever you find him, before he draws his party into a body; and take care to prevent him from putting himself in possession of fortified cities and strong holds; for if he once gains that point, he may perhaps cost us more trouble to subdue him than Absalom did."

Joab in the same instant posted forward with his brother, and the troops that were assigned him to search for Sheba.

On his arrival at Gibeon, a village forty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, he met Amasa in his march at the head of a gallant army. Amasa advancing towards him to embrace him, Joab, with a breast-plate upon his body, and his sword girt about him, going to meet him, insidiously dropped his sword out of the scabbard, and presently catched it up again with one hand, while he took Amasa by the beard* with the other, as if it had been to have saluted him, but sheathed it in his bowels, so that he died upon the place.

This execrable murder of a gallant youth, nearly allied to him, and without provocation, certainly was the highest degree of ignominy on the character of Joab, who could be excited to it by no better motive than a malicious envy at his preferment, and a jealousy of his being too much in the king's favour.

It was much upon the same ground that he had already murdered Abner, and much after the same treacherous manner

^{*} It was an ancient custom among the Greciaus, to take the person whom they addressed by the chin or beard, and the Turks to this day continue the same custom. The Arabians also have a great regard to the beard. The wives and children kiss the beards of their husbands and fathers when they salute them; and even when two friends meet together, they interchange kisses in the same manner. The like custom is still preserved among the Indians, who, when they would give a hearty salute, take each other by the chin, and cry, Bobba, that is, father, or Bii, brother, as modern travellers relate.

that he did it too. In the former case, indeed, he might appear to have some specious pretence for it, in revenge of his brother Asahel; but for this second murder he had not even the shadow of excuse.

Upon the death of Amasa, Joab ad- ing of the soldiers. vanced with his army in quest of Sheba, body, with orders to make proclamation through the army, that he was a bad man, and treated according to his desert; desiring all those that were for the king to follow Joab, * and his brother Abishai.

While the body lay exposed in the highway, there were multitudes gathered together, gazing upon him with astonishment; so that the man who had it in charge removed it to a village, where he lodged it in a house, and threw a coat over it; and as soon as the surprise was over, the soldiers marched forward after their commander.

Joab had by this time pursued Sheba almost through the land of Israel; and at last getting intelligence that he had sheltered himself in a strong town called Beth-Maachah, + Joab ordered the place to be immediately invested, and a trench cast about it; and at the same time to ply it with mines and batteries; being resolved to destroy it, in resentment for the indignity offered him by the inhabitants for shutting their gates against him.

* So insolent was Joab become, upon the presumption that David durst not punish him, that as he ventured upon this bloody act, so he imagined, that though the sight of Amasa's dead body might stop the march of those that came by it, yet, upon its being given out that he was again become their general, their love for him was such that they would not scruple to follow him.—Patrick's Commentary.

+ A city in the northern part of the canton allotted to the tribe of Naphtali. About eighty years after this event, it was taken and ravaged by Benhadad king of Syria. About two hundred years after, it was captured and sacked by Tiglath-pileser, who carried the inhabitants captive into Assyria. This place was subsequently rebuilt; and, according to Josephus, became, under the name of Abila, the capital of the district of Abi-

While the army of Joab were battering the town, a good and prudent woman, ‡ out of zeal for the service of her country in that extremity, mounted the wall, and called out to Joab from the battlements, to speak a word with him out of the hear-

Joab complied with her desire, and the leaving only one man with the general's speech she made him was to this purpose: "Whereas God has given us kings and governors to protect us against our enemies, and to maintain and preserve us in peace and unity one with another; you

It seems not unlikely, that this woman was a governess in this city; for though that office was most commonly occupied by men, yet there wants not instances of women, (as in the case of Deborah, Judg. iv. 4. and queen Athaliah, 2 Kings xi.) who have been employed in the administration of civil affairs. If she was invested with any such authority, she was the properest person to desire a parley with the general; and reason good she had to desire it, because she knew the present temper and fears of the citizens and soldiers both, namely, that, considering the imminent danger they were in, they were generally desirous of peace, and restrained from it only by Sheba's power and authority.—In the beginning of this woman's speech to Joab, there is something that seems both abrupt and obscure; 'They were wont to speak in old time, saying, they should surely ask counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter,' 2 Sam. xx. 18. According to this translation, the sense of the words is,—' This city, which thou art about to destroy, is no mean and contemptible one, but so honourable and considerable for its wisdom, and the wise people in it, that when any difference did arise among any of the neighbouring places, they used proverbially to say, We will ask the opinion and advice of the men of Abel about it, and we will stand to their arbitration; and so all parties were satisfied, and disputes ended: so that her words, according to this sense, are a high commendation of the city of Abel, for its being a place (time out of mind) very eminent for the wisdom and prudence of its inhabitants. But there is another translation in the margin of our bibles, which seems to be more natural, and makes the woman speak in this manner:- When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, Surely he will ask, if we will have peace; for the law prescribes, that he should offer peace to strangers, much more then to Israelitish cities; and if he would once do this, we should soon bring things to an amicable agreement; for we are peaceable people, and faithful to our prince.' So that, according to this interpretation, the woman both modestly reproved Joab for the neglect of his duty, and artfully engaged him in the performance of it.—Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Anotations.

tion, to ruin one of the most eminent cities of the whole land of Israel."

Joab at this expressed his utter abhorrence of so foul a deed; and said, he hoped God would always keep him in a better mind: adding, that he was so far from having the least thought of committing any violence on this famous city, or of doing harm to any one person in it, that if the people would but deliver up Sheba, that rebellious son of Bichri, to justice, he would at the same moment draw off his army.

Upon this promise and declaration the woman called out to Joab to have a little patience, and Sheba's head should be thrown down to him over the wall.

Upon this, she went back to the citizens, and reasoned the matter with them in this manner: "Are you then resolved, like a company of wicked men, and for the sake of a wicked wretch, a mere stranger to you, to sacrifice your habitations, your wives, and your children? What has Sheba done for you, to balance the obligations you owe to David? Or, setting aside all other arguments, are you able to defend your city against this mighty army?"

The woman's address, founded on truth and reason, carried with it such weight, that they forthwith cut off Sheba's head by consent, for a composition, and cast it over the wall. Whereupon the siege was forthwith raised: and the people returning to Jerusalem, David declared Joab general of all his troops.

Benaiah had the command given him of all the guards of the body, and the six hundred veterans; Adoram was the appointed treasurer, Jehoshaphat was recorder, Sheva secretary, Zadok and Abiathar continued in the priesthood.

Soon after this transaction, it pleased God to afflict the Israelites with a sore famine throughout the land, and David earnestly besought God to reveal unto him in mercy, both the cause of that

are come, without any injury or provoca- grievous judgment, and how it might be removed.

> Answer was returned by the prophets, that the blood of the Gibeonites, which Saul had most perfidiously caused to be shed, cried to heaven for vengeance, as an action not only contrary to the oath and promise of Joshua, and ratified also by the elders, but against conscience and common justice. Wherefore they demanded that the king should give such satisfaction to the Gibeonites as they might require for the loss of their slaughtered citizens, and then the Israelites might expect that God would be gracious to them in delivering them from their present calamity.

When David came to understand this from the prophets themselves, he sent to the Gibeonites, and asked them, what satisfaction would content them?

They demanded that seven of Saul's sons, or of his race, might be delivered up to justice.*

^{*} Whether the Gibeonites did right or wrong in exacting so severe a retaliation for the injury Saul and his family had done them, sacred history is nowise concerned. But to show us from whence this barbarous custom of hanging up men to appease the anger of the gods proceeded, the account of it is prefaced with this observation, 2 Sam. xxi. 2. 'The Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel,' (for among them they learnt no such practice,) 'but a remnant of the Amorites; who were addicted to this horrid superstition, of which the Gibeonites still retained some tincture, notwithstanding their abode among people of better sentiments. Though the scripture speaks in the dialect of these men, yet we greatly err in the conclusion from hence, if we imagine that God can be delighted with human sacrifices, which he so frequently and vehemently expresses his detestation of. He desires the death or punishment of no man, except it be in pursuance of his wise providence, or when the criminal, by some bad conduct, has forfeited his life to the government he lived under; nor would he have required the execution of Saul's posterity, had it not been to pro-cure the poor distressed Gibeonites (who were truly drudges to their Hebrew masters) a kinder treatment for the future; had it not been to testify his abhorrence of all oppression and violence, and to show that the cries of the meanest slaves, as well as the mightiest monarch, enter the gars of the most High, that with him there is no respect of persons, but that 'the rich and the poor to him are both alike.' Had it not been to repair the injury done to his most holy name, in the violation of the compact which both Joshua and the princes

The king ordered seven of them to be found out, and put into the hands of the Gibeonites, to do with them as they pleased,* but excepted Mephibosheth, for the sake of Jonathan his father.

The Gibeonites accepted of this as a composition, and hanged them all; and being thus satisfied, God sent them rain, and so kindly a continuance of it, that the earth in due time recovered its fertility, and brought forth fruits in their season, fresh and flourishing, as before.

Plenty being now restored to the afflicted land, David turned his thoughts towards the reduction of his enemies, marched out with his army against the Philistines, fought and routed them: but following the chase too far, Ishbi-benob, the son of Rapha, one of the race of giants, whose armour was a coat of mail, a lance weighing three hundred shekels, and his sword by his side, seeing David alone, and quite spent, turned short upon him, struck him to the earth, and had certainly slain him, if Abishai, Joab's brother, had not in the precise moment come to his relief, bestriding David, not only protected him, but killed his enemy.

The whole army, sensible of the danger the king was in, and of the providence of his deliverance, that the commanders bound him by an oath never to hazard his royal person any more in a battle; being naturally brave, he laid himself too open to the common chance of war; and if he should miscarry, it would be an irreparable loss to the nation, to be deprived of the blessings they enjoyed under his mild and gentle administration.

Soon after this engagement, however, the Philistines rallied their forces, and fixed their place of rendezvous at Gob. David having notice of it, despatched an army immediately against them.

In this expedition, Sibbechai the Hushathite, one of the bravest men in the whole body, acquired great reputation by cutting off several of the race of giants, men of prodigious bulk and strength, with his own hand. He had in short the honour of a great share in that day's success.

The Philistines after this brought another army in the field, and the king sent out his troops to encounter them. In this encounter, Elhanan, who was allied to the king, signalized his valour, by slaying in a single combat one of the boldest men the Philistines had in their party: the rest turned their backs upon it, and lost great numbers in this engagement.

Notwithstanding this, they in a short time recruited yet once again, and encamped at a certain town not far from the borders of the Israelites. The Philistines had in their camp a man six cubits high; six fingers on a hand,† and six toes on each foot, and one that valued himself upon his descent from the stock of giants.

of Israel made with his people, and confirmed with the solemnity of an oath: in a word, had it not been by this exemplary punishment, to give mankind a lesson of instruction concerning the sacredness of oaths and treaties, and how religiously they ought to be observed, even towards those that are in the lowest circumstances of life.

^{*} It could not be for any private end that David delivered these children of Saul into the hands of the Gibeonites, but purely in obedience to the will of God, who had both directed, and warranted him so to do. For we cannot but suppose, as Josephus does, that, when David consulted the oracle concerning the famine, God informed him not only for what crime it was inflicted, but by what means likewise it was to be removed: and therefore, being let into all this, he was not at liberty to do what he pleased, but compelled rather to give up the children as so many victims, notwithstanding his promise and oath to their father; because a superior power interposed, and, in so doing, cancelled the prior obligation.—Stackhouse.

[†] This is not a solitary instance: Tavernier informs us that the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in 1648, had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot. And Maupertnis, in his seventeenth letter, says that he met with two families near Berlin, where sedigitism was equally transmitted on both sides of father and mother. I saw once a young girl, in the county of Londonderry in Ireland, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, but her stature had nothing gigantic in it. The daughters of Caius Horatius, of patrician dignity, were called sedigitæ because they had six fingers on each hand. Volcatius, a poet, was called sedigitus for the same reason.—Dr A. Clarke,

honour to kill this gigantic man in single combat, and at the head of his troops, which contributed very much to the success of the day; and acquired him the glorious character of a valiant man.

This was the last battle the Israelites had with the Philistines; for from that time forward they never had courage to

make head against them.

King David having now entirely vanquished his most inveterate and powerful enemies, and obtained for his people a profound, undisturbed peace, devoted himself to the service of God, and composed divers psalms and hymns to different tunes, in order to celebrate the praises of that God who had so often wrought salvation for his chosen people.

These compositions he ordered to be sung by the Levites, on the sabbaths and other festivals, accompanied with musical instruments provided for that purpose: as they had an instrument with ten strings, to be touched with a quill, the psaltery with twelve strings to be played upon with the fingers, and large cymbals of brass.

The sacred historian, having recorded several of the hymns composed by the royal psalmist, and having mentioned, that the king had about him eight and thirty worthies, or men renowned for their valour and probity, we shall particularly select for minute observation the names. characters, and remarkable achievements of five of them, by which judgment may be formed of the rest.

The first was Adino, the Eznite, who broke several times into the body of the enemy, and killed eight hundred of them in one encounter, with his own hand.

The second was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, who was with the king in Arasam. It was his fortune to be in a battle, where the Israelites, finding themselves mightily overpowered with numbers, gave way and fled, leaving him alone to make good his ground. This he did so effec-

Jonathan, the son of Shimei, had the tually, that he gave a stand to the whole army, killing and wounding great numbers; so that his sword was, in a manner, fixed to his right hand with the blood. His great example of bravery encouraged the fugitives, and made them rally, and charge the enemy with such fury, that they recovered the day, and crowned it with a wonderful and most illustrious victory; Eleazar killing them, and the common soldiers stripping them.

> The third was Shammah, the son of Agee, upon another engagement with the Philistines, finding the Israelites giving way, opposed his single body to the whole force of the enemy; did great execution upon them, broke their order, put them to flight, and pursued them with a great overthrow.

> In these three instances we read the bravery of these three heroical adventurers, in the plain field, and in the face of an enemy.

> At another time when the king was at Jerusalem, and the Philistines encamped before it, in the great valley that extends as far as Bethlehem, about twenty furlongs from the town, David went up to a high tower to ask counsel and direction of God, about the government and event of the war. And speaking to his friends of the delicious water that was in his country, and especially of the well at Bethlehem,* that was next the gate, "What

^{*} This place was generally called Bethlehem of Judah, or Bethlehem-Ephratah, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem which belonged to the tribe of Zebulon. Neither remarkable for the number, nor for the wealth of its inhabitants, it nevertheless became famous for being the birthplace of the royal psalmist, whence it obtained the name of the city of David; but rendered still more eminent in having been selected by the most High, as the place where the Saviour of the world was born. It is also the scene of that admirable eclogue which is contained in the book of Ruth. "This village," says Volney, "situated two leagues south-east of Jerusalem, is seated on an eminence, in a country full of hills and valleys, and might be rendered very agreeable. The soil is the best in all these districts; fruits, vines, olives, and sesamum, succeed here extremely well. They reckon about six hundred men in the village capable of bearing arms. Formerly their whole trade con-

claimed, "for a draught of that water !""

These three men over-hearing him, went their way immediately, broke through

sisted in the manufacture of beads; but the reverend fathers not being able to find a market for all they could furnish, have resumed the cultivation of their lands. They make a white wine, so excellent in its quality, as to justify the former celebrity of the wines of Judea." Clarke, describing this place, says, "After travelling for about an hour from the time of our leaving Jerusalem, we came in view of Bethlehem, and halted to enjoy the interesting sight. The town appeared covering the ridge of a hill on the southern side of a deep and extensive valley, and reaching from east to west; the most conspicuous object being the monastery, erected over the cave of the nativity, in the suburbs, and upon the eastern side. The bat-tlements and walls of this building seemed like those of a vast fortress. The Dead sea below, upon our left, appeared so near to us, that we thought we could have rode thither in a very short space of time. Still nearer stood a mountain upon its western shore, resembling in its form the cone of Vesuvius, near Naples, and having also a crater upon its top which was plainly discernible. The distance, however, is much greater than it appears to be; the magnitude of the objects beheld in this fine prospect causing them to appear less remote than they really are. The atmosphere was remarkably clear and serene; but we saw none of those clouds of smoke, which, by some writers, are said to exhale from the sur-face of the lake, nor from any neighbouring mountain. Every thing about it was in the high-est degree grand and awful. Bethlehem is six miles from Jerusalem. Josephus describes the interval between the two cities as equal only to twenty stadia; and in the passage referred to, he makes an allusion to a celebrated well, which, both from the account given by him of its situa-tion, and more especially from the text of the sacred scripture, 2 Sam. xxiii. 15, seems to have contained the identical fountain, of whose pure and delicious water we were now drinking. well still retains its pristine renown; and many an expatriated Bethlehemite has made it the theme of his longing and regret.'

* It is commonly observed by the Jewish commentators, that, though David expressed a desire for some of the waters of Bethlehem, because it was the place of his nativity, and the water not improbably very excellent in its kind, yet he did not do this with any intent that any should ven-ture their lives to fetch him it. In this action, however, they have remarked three wonderful things, viz. that three men could break through the whole host of the Philistines; and when they had so done, durst stay to draw water out of the well; and then carry it away, with a high hand, through the same host to David: but they might have added a fourth remark, viz. that they attempted this at the gate of Bethlehem, where a garrison of the Philistines kept a strong guard.—

Patrick's Commentary.

would I give," with earnest desire he ex- the camp of the enemy, fetched some water from the well, and came back with it the same way they went;-the barbarians standing amazed all the while at the hardihood of the undertaking, and not daring, though so few in number, to interrupt them in their return.

> Upon their presenting of this water to the king, he gave God thanks for the safety of them that brought it; but it would not become him to drink it, 'for,' he said, 'it was the price of blood,' and so he poured it upon the ground as an offering to the Lord.

> The fourth was Abishai, the brother of Joab, that in one day slew three hundred of the enemy.

> The fifth, and the last of these worthy champions we shall mention, was Benaiah, a man of a sacerdotal family, who fought upon a challenge, with two brothers, of eminent fame for feats of arms among the Moabites, and killed them both.

> He fought again with an Egyptian of monstrous force and size; going down to him with only a staff in his hand, he threw himself upon his adversary, who was armed at all points, forced his spear out of his hands, and despatched him with his own weapon; and for his greater honour, disarmed him while he was yet living.+

⁺ We have a good elucidation of this in a duel between Dioxippus the Athenian and Horratas a Macedonian, before Alexander: "The Macedonian, proud of his military skill, treated the naked Athenian with contempt, and then challenged him to fight with him the ensuing day. The Macedonian came armed cap à pie to the place; on his left arm he had a brazen shield, and in the same hand a spear called sarissa; he had a javelin in his right hand and a sword girded on his side; in short, he appeared armed as though he were going to contend with a host. Dioxippus came into the field with a chaplet on his head, a purple sash on his left arm, his body naked, smeared over with oil, and in his right hand a strong knotty club. Horratas, supposing he could easily kill his antagonist while at a distance, threw his javelin, which Dioxippus, suddenly stooping, dexterously avoided, and, before Horratas could transfer the spear from his left to his right hand, sprang forward, and with one blow of his club, broke it in two. The Ma-cedonian, being deprived of both his spears, began to draw his sword; but before he could draw it.

equal, if not superior, to the rest. There other three and thirty not inferior to was a lion dropped into a pitfall; the them. snow drove in, and covered the mouth of with a staff killed the lion.*

out Dioxippus seized him, tripped up his heels, and threw him with great violence on the ground. He then put his foot on his neck, drew out his sword, and lifting up his club, was about to dash out the brains of the overthrown champion, had he not been prevented by the king." Q. Curt. lib. ix. How similar are the two cases! 'He went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hands, and slew him with his own spear. Benaiah appears to have been just such another clubsman as Dioxippus—Dr A. Clarke.

* Whether Benaiah, listening only to the sug-

gestions of an undaunted courage, or because he could not otherwise reach the shaggy destroyer, went down of his own accord into the pit; or whether, as Bochart contends, he was driven by a storm of snow to take shelter, by accident, in the same pit where the lion had taken refuge just before, from the severity of the weather,—is of little importance; the fact of his encountering a lion, in these unfavourable circumstances, and killing him, is certain. Nor are such instances awanting in the common page of history. Curtius relates in the beginning of his eighth book, that Alexander the Great singly encountered a lion of unusual magnitude, which rushed out upon him, and by one blow laid him dead at his feet: he tells a similar story of Lysimachus, when he was hunting in Syria. But this method of destroying the lion is attended with great danger, and sometimes proves fatal to the assailant; and, therefore, stratagem is commonly preferred to force. He is hunted with large dogs, supported by men on horseback, who dislodge, and force him to retire. But, among the Arabians, the common method is to dig a pit in the spot which he is observed to haunt, which they cover slightly with reeds or small branches of trees, and fixing a live animal upon it, they frequently decoy and catch him. To destroy the lion, and other beasts of prey, was anciently thought no small part of a warrior's glory. The faithful page of sacred history informs us, that the first oppressors of their fellow-men endeavoured to conciliate the favourable opinion of the public, by distinguishing themselves in the chase. So late as the time of the crusades, the destruction of a lion was reckoned, by the kings and princes who engaged in those insane enter-prises, an exploit worthy of being engraved on their seals, and celebrated in the songs of their bards. The simple memorials in the Old Testament, of the courage and address displayed by various individuals, in single combat with the lion, prove more forcibly, than long and laboured

He performed another feat of valour, | There were five great men; and the

David now determined to number the it; so that the beast finding no way to people of all the tribes of Israel,+ not reget out again, roared most hideously. membering the old precept of the great Benaiah happening to pass that way, hear- lawgiver Moses, that as often as it should ing of this outcry, went to the place, and be found requisite to muster the people, an oblation should be offered unto the Lord of a shekel a head; but sent Joab abruptly to take a general account.

Joab excused himself from it as a thing that was needless; but David would not admit of the excuse, and therefore positively commanded him to go about it immediately. In obedience therefore to the king's solemn injunction, he summoned the scribes and the heads of the tribes to advise with them, and went through the whole land of Israel to make the computation.

After nine months and twenty days, Joab returned to Jerusalem, and told the king upon the whole, that besides the tribe of Benjamin, and of Levi, which he had not as yet taken an account of, he found the number of the rest of the Israelites to amount to eight hundred thousand men, who were able to bear arms.

the severe calamities which the inhabitants of those countries occasionally suffer from his assaults. We discover many qualities in him, which command our admiration and praise; but we also de-tect many which excite detestation and horror. In the sacred volume, the lion accordingly is at one time the subject of praise, and at another, the object of pointed condemnation. Nothing in heaven or on earth is so sacred and excellent; nothing, on the other hand, so destructive and terrible in earth or hell, which the lion is not in some part of scripture employed to symbolize .-

† David probably coveted an extension of empire; and having through the suggestions of an adversary given way to this evil disposition, he could not well look to God for help, and, therefore, wished to know whether the thousands of Israel and Judah might be deemed equal to the conquest which he meditated. His design was, to force all the Israelites to perform military service, and engage in the contests which his ambition had in view; and as the people might resist this census, soldiers were employed to make it, who might not only put down resistance, but also supdetails, the terrible character of that animal, and press any disturbances that might arise. - Horne.

the tribe of Judah alone having reckoned five hundred thousand.

When Joab was absent on this business, David being informed by the prophet that the anger of the Lord was kindled against him for his rash conduct, and not complying with the precepts delivered down by his servant Moses,—whereupon he betook himself to true repentance, begged pardon of Almighty God, with prayer and supplications, and obtained it.

After this, God sent the prophet Gad to him, with an offer of three things to his choice; that is, either a seven years' famine,* three months' flight before an enemy, or three days' pestilence; and to demand an immediate answer from him which of the three he would take?

David found himself in a great strait which to choose, thus arguing with himself: "If I choose the famine, it would look as if I had more concern for myself than for my people; for my storehouses are much better provided with corn than theirs. If to lie at the mercy of an enemy, it appears the same still; for I have strong holds and castles to repair to for my own safety. But the third is a calamity that threatens governors in common with their subjects."

As he was thus deliberating, the prophet pressed him to an immediate answer; to which he made this return: "That he would rather fall into the hands of God than of man;" and therefore submitting himself to God's pleasure and goodness, he chose the pestilence.

The prophet had no sooner received and reported David's answer, than the Israelites were seized with a most unaccountable distemper, that was attended with certain death, and accompanied with accidents that baffled all the doctors, either to find the cause or remedy; so that, in fine, they died in prodigious numbers. Some went off with gripes, and torments that immediately despatched them, some with faintness and languors, in despite of the physicians; others with giddiness, dimness of sight, suffocations, &c. Some again expired themselves, before they could thoroughly perform the office of the burial for their dead friends. The mortality, in short, was so great, that betwixt break of day and dinner-time, there were swept away by this pestilence seventy thousand persons.

The destroying angel was now going to Jerusalem upon the same commission; but the king putting on sackcloth, and humbly supplicating God with prayers and tears, to remove this dreadful judgment; in the midst of his ejaculations, he lifted up his eyes, and discovered an angel, with a drawn sword, moving toward Jerusalem.

Upon perceiving this he broke out into a more passionate exclamation, "Lord," says he, "punish the shepherd; but alas! what have these sheep done? Pour down thy wrath rather upon me and my family; but spare the innocent people, I beseech thee."

The earnest supplications of the pious and patriot king reached the throne of grace, and God immediately put a stop to the pestilence; ordering the king, by the mouth of the prophet Gad, to go up without delay to the thrashing-floor of Araunah,

^{*} There is a difference between this account and that which we meet with in the book of Chronicles. There the famine is said to be for three years only, but here it is said to be for seven. The Septuagint indeed makes it no more than three; and for this reason some have imagined, that the seven is an error crept into the text, especially considering that three years of famine agree better with three days' pestilence, and three months' flight before an enemy. But there is no reason to suppose any error in the text; it is but saying, that in Chronicles, the author speaks of those years of famine which were to come for David's sin only, but in Samuel, of those three years of famine likewise, which were sent for Saul's sin, 2 Sam. xxi. Now within one year after the famine that was sent for Saul's sin, was David's sin in numbering the people; the intermediate year then was either the sabbatical year, wherein the people were not allowed to sow nor reap, or a year of such excessive drought, that the crop came to little or nothing. Upon either of these accounts we may properly enough say, that there were four years of famine before, and three more being now added to them make up the seven that are here mentioned .- Poole's Annotations.

and there to erect an altar, and to offer sacrifice upon it.

David went away to the place, according to his direction, where he found Araunah thrashing his corn, who no sooner saw David and his sons coming towards him than he ran out to meet them.

Now this Araunah was a Jebusite, and so particular a friend of David's that he protected and secured him from all damage upon the very taking of the city, as has been before observed.

At the king's approach, he thus humbly addressed him: "Is there any thing now that my lord will be pleased to command of his servant?" "I come," said David, "to buy your thrashing-floor, and to raise an altar to God upon it, and to offer sacrifice." "Nay," replied Araunah, "not only my thrashing-floor, but my ploughs and my oxen for burnt-offerings, are all at my lord's service. And I beseech God to look graciously down upon your worship and sacrifice."

The king was exceedingly pleased with the candour and greatness of this good man's mind; but told him, that it must be a purchase, not a gift; for it would not be acceptable to offer a sacrifice that should cost him nothing. So Araunah submitted himself to David, who gave him fifty shekels for the floor; and offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, upon it. After which solemnity, David was reinstated in God's grace and favour.

This was the place whither Abraham brought his son Isaac to, when he was commanded to offer him for a sacrifice. David, on a grateful remembrance of the favour of God in averting the heavy judgment at his intercession, and afterwards accepting the oblations he offered, came to a resolution to call the whole place by the name of the people's altar, or the Israelites' altar, and to build a temple there; which purpose was afterward ratified by God himself, who sent his prophet to him with a prediction, that his successor should there build a temple.

David employed people upon this, to take an account how many strangers he had in his dominions, which were reckoned to amount to about one hundred and eighty thousand persons. Out of these he chose eighty thousand to work in stone; the rest to be employed in carrying all sorts of materials; appointing thirty-five thousand to oversee the workmen.

There was provided for the people a prodigious quantity of brass and iron, and cedar wood in abundance was brought from Tyre and Sidon;—though David told his familiar friends, that these materials were only to lie ready for use, when his son should have occasion for them, which would save time trouble and expedite the work; but that as yet his son was too young and unexperienced to manage and direct so arduous an undertaking.

CHAPTER II.

David delivers to his son Solomon special instructions concerning the building of a temple, to be devoted to God's immediate honour, worship, and service.—Adonyjah, David's fourth son, on his growing infirm, claims the government by succession; but relinquishes the same upon the opposition of the people.—Solomon proclaimed king.—David's transactions a short time before his death, viz. his speech to the people, and advice to his son concerning the work he had left him to accomplish; and the future administration of affairs.—Hs death and sketch of character.

Such was the state and condition of the Israelites, when David called his son Solomon to him, and gave him special charge, that as soon as he came to the throne, he should enter upon the building of a temple for the honour and worship of God; the charge ran in terms to this effect:

"I would have done it myself; but being frequently engaged in war, and consequently a man of blood, I was forbidden by an express command from Heaven, and the work reserved by providence for my youngest son. This son, according to the prediction was to be are the never-failing rewards of righteouscalled Solomon, who should be a prince of peace: of whom it was foretold, that God would take him with a paternal affection into his care, and that the whole people of Israel should be happy under his administration; and enjoy not only a peace, the greatest of all temporal blessings, with foreigners, but live free from any civil or intestine divisions among themselves. Now," continued David, "since you were designed to be a king, even before you were born, do you endeavour to behave yourself as a man otherwise worthy of that honour conferred on you by providence; govern yourself according to the measure of piety, justice, and true fortitude; pay a reverence to the precepts, laws, and traditions of Moses; observe them religiously yourself, nor do not suffer any violation of them in others. As for the temple that God hath appointed to be built in your reign, be sure to attend to it as you ought to do, and let not the difficulty of the work discourage you; for it shall be my care to have all the materials in readiness for you to begin withal, upon your first entrance upon the government of Israel. I have provided ten thousand talents of silver, brass and iron to an immense quantity, beside timber and stone in vast abundance. You shall have also many thousands of carpenters and masons, and the means of supplying yourself with what you want. Attend your business with care and despatch; for upon the finishing of this undertaking, you may assure yourself of the perpetual favour and protection

Having delivered this charge to his son, David enjoined the principal men of the several tribes to concur with his son in the pious design of rearing an edifice to perpetuate the glories of the God of Israel, and without being solicitous upon any other account, to attend the business of religion in the first place; for that alone would be sufficient to secure the peace and welfare of the commonwealth, which

of Almighty God."

ness and justice.

He appointed also, that upon the finishing of the temple, the ark should be placed in it, with all the holy vessels and utensils thereunto belonging, which he told them should have been there deposited long before, if their forefathers had observed the injunction God laid upon them, of raising a temple to him immediately upon their coming into the land of promise.

These counsels and exhortations of David were addressed indifferently both to his son and to the princes.

Though David was not yet arrived to an age that was deemed an advanced one in those days of longevity, (being now but seventy years old,) yet his constitution was greatly impaired by the hardships he had undergone, both in escaping the indignation of Saul, and in numberless campaigns; insomuch that his blood was so chilled, that all the coverings and blankets they could throw over him would not procure him any heat; so that a council of physicians was called, and they unanimously agreed, that the best thing for a man under those decays was a fair and young bed-fellow;* as the warmth being gentle and kindly, would relieve nature without force. They found out upon this. in the city, a very beautiful woman that

[.] It is the observation of Galen, that nothing so effectually procures heat and health, as the application of any thing young to the stomach: the advice of David's physicians therefore was not amiss; but it had been sinful advice, and such as he could not have followed, had not this young woman, whom he took to bed to him, been his concubinary wife. In those days such wives were allowable: and that she served him in this capacity is very manifest from the account we have of her in scripture; for, whereas it is said, that 'the king knew her not,' this certainly implies, that he might have had carnal knowledge of her without sin or scandal; whereas it is said, that 'she lay in his bosom,' this phrase every where in scripture de-notes what was the sole privilege of a wife or concubine. Nor can we imagine, why Adonijah's desiring her in marriage had been so heinous a crime in Solomon's account, had she not been the king' wife, and he, by this means, had designed to revive his pretensions to the crown .- Poole's An-

put her to bed to him. Her name was Abishag, and her business only to lie by him, and comfort him; which she might safely and innocently do, the king being now past the temptations of all irregular dispositions.

David had a fourth son, whose name was Adonijah, born to him by Haggith, and the next after Absalom, in point of beauty, stature, and gracefulness of person; nay, and in his ambition too, he was not far behind him.

This Adonijah (Absalom being dead) laid claim to the government,* as the next

* Adonijah could not be ignorant, that Solomon had been appointed by God himself to succeed David in the kingdom; and his whole conduct shows that he considered Solomon only as his rival. After the death of Absalom, Adonijah was David's eldest son: and no doubt he considered the kingdom as his birthright, and confided in the support of the people to seize upon it, without any regard to his father, or to the revealed will of God. It is remarkable how frequently the firstborn were set aside by his express appointment. In the ordinary course of things, it is expedient that the primogeniture should have the precedency; and the judicial law of Moses, (as well as the civil laws of most nations,) was formed accordingly. But the examples of Jacob, Judah, the sons of Joseph, David, Solomon, and others, prove that this is not grounded on moral obligation; that it is not divine, or unalterable, or to be put in competition with the welfare of whole nations, and the liberty and fights of all the rest of mankind; according to the sentiments of some authors, who most absurdly ground their doctrine upon the word of God, though it is evidently contradictory to it!—Absalom had been displeased with his father, though most unjustly, because of the disgrace under which he laid him for the murder of Amnon: but David had never given Adonijah the least cause of displeasure; except that, in obedience to God, he intended and appointed Solomon to be his successor. It is probable, that Adonijah was of an imperious disposition; and David very imprudently indulged him, and never restrained or reproved him in any matter. was David's fault: for he ought to have exerted his authority, and kept him in subjection; but at the same time it aggravated Adonijah's contempt and ingratitude. He seems to have greatly re-sembled his elder brother Absalom: like him he was too much indulged, and beloved on account of his exterior accomplishments; and like him, he affected royal pomp and magnificence: and he succeeded to his ambitious projects, though he concealed and deferred them, till his father was, as he supposed, finally incapacitated for business .-Scott.

came up exactly to their prescription, and | in succession, and obtaining many friends by interest and popularity to assist him toward the gaining of his point, he furnished himself with a pompous equipage of chariots, horses, guards, and the like; while his father innocently suffered him to go on, without the least check or caution; nay, or so much as asking him the design of this mighty preparation.

His chief accomplices were Joab the general, and Abiathar the high-priest; but Zadok the high-priest, and the prophet Nathan, Benaiah the captain of the guard, Shimei, the king's friends, and the generality of the soldiery, were in a different interest, and opposed his measures.

To strengthen his interest, and promote his ambitious design, Adonijah prepared a mighty treat at Enrogel, in the suburbs of Jerusalem, near the fountain in the king's gardens.+

To this entertainment he invited all his brothers, save only Solomon, and there was Joab also, and Abiathar, and the chiefs of the tribe of Judah; but neither Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, nor any others of that interest, were invited.

The prophet Nathan took notice of this to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, in these words: "Look ye; here is Adonijah setting himself up for king, and David

⁺ To fountains, or rivers, says Dr Chandler, the Turks and the Greeks frequently repair for re-freshment, especially the latter on their festivals, when whole families are seen sitting on the grass, and enjoying their early or evening repast, beneath the trees by the side of a rill. And we are assured by the same author, that in such grateful retreats they often give public entertainments. He visited an assembly of Greeks, who, after celebrating a religious festival, were sitting under half tents, with store of melons and grapes, besides lambs and sheep to be killed, wine in gourds and skins, and other necessary provisions. pears to have been the feast which Adonijah gave his friends at Enrogel. It was held near a well or fountain of water, and there 'he slew sheep, and oxen, and fat cattle, and invited his brethren' and the principal people of the kingdom. Enrogel was not chosen for secrecy, for it was in the vicinity of the royal city, but for the beauty of the surrounding scenery. It was not a magnificent cold collation; the animals on which they feasted were, on the contrary, killed and dressed on the spot for this princely repast.—Paxton.

knows nothing of what's done: wherefore | he addressed her in this manner: "The let it be your care, as well for your son's sake, as for your own, to look after this affair. Go you to David, and when you have him alone, remind him of his oath, that Solomon should reign after him; and yet Adonijah is as good as upon the throne already. While you are discoursing this matter with the king, I may come into the chamber to you, and second your information."

Bathsheba followed the prophet's advice, went in to the king, where she made her reverence; and after leave given her to deliver what she had to say, she gave David an account of the affair in the very words the prophet had dictated to her, telling him moreover the circumstances of Adonijah's entertainment; whom he had invited, and whom he had left out. Also, that the people were in a suspense what to do, till he should declare his successor, and that her own life and her sons' were both at stake upon the issue.

While Bathsheba was relating these circumstances, the king's servants brought word that the prophet Nathan was at the door to wait upon him. He was immediately called in, and upon the very instant of entering the presence, he asked David, in some confusion, "Whether or no he that day transferred his government to Adonijah, and declared him his successor? He has made a very splendid feast, invited such and such persons to it; omitted such and such others; and now are they eating, drinking, and making merry, with healths and acclamations to the honour of their new king Adonijah; but that neither himself, Zadok the high-priest, and Benaiah the captain of the guards, were invited. Now, it would be well," added the prophet, "to let the world understand whether this be done with your knowledge and approbation or not."

Bathsheba, who had withdrawn when the prophet came in, was now, by the king's order, called for back again. She thing that I have sworn formerly. I do now swear over again, in the presence of the great God. Your son Solomon shall reign after me, and sit upon my throne;* and you shall see it done this very day."

Upon which declaration and assurance, she submissively took her leave, wishing

the king a long life.

The king, thus warned by the prophet Nathan, immediately determined to put into execution his resolution concerning the elevation of his son Solomon to the throne of Israel, after his decease; and to abolish the claim of Adonijah, he sent for Zadok and Benaiah, and bid them take the prophet Nathan and the royal guards with them, mount Solomon upon the king's mule,+ carry him out of the city to

* At what time this promise was made, is a matter of some dispute. The generality of inter-preters are of opinion, that, after the death of the first child which David had by Bathsheba, he comforted her for her loss, and gave her assurance, that, if God should give him another son by her, he would not fail to make him his successor. But it is much more probable that David did not make any declaration of a promise to Bathsheba, until God had revealed it to him, that he should have a son, distinct from what he had already, who should succeed him in the kingdom, and have the honour of building him a temple; and, no sooner was Solomon born, but David was convinced that this was the child to whom the promises belonged, by Nathan's being sent to give him a name, denoting his being 'beloved of the Lord: and it was at this time, most probably, that David gave his mother a promise, confirmed upon oath, that, since God had so manifestly declared in favour of the child, he, for his part, would do his utmost to facilitate his succession: but, upon the whole, he did not choose for himself, neither was his declaration to Bathsheba previous to Nathan's information, but rather the effect and consequence of it. But even suppose there had been no divine interposition in favour of Solomon, why might not David, who had done such signal service in his reign, nominate his successor? Several great princes, in most nations, have claimed this privilege. Among the Romans, Aurelius named Nerva, and Nerva chose Trajan, and so did Augustus appoint his successor. And that this was a prerogative belonging to the crown of Israel, and what continued with it for some time after David, is evident from the story of his grandson Rehoboam, who, though a prince of no great merit, took upon him the authority of nominating his successor, and, to the prejudice of his eldest son, made one of his youngest king.—Stach.

+ All the rest of David's sons were wont to ride

was accordingly brought to David, and upon mules when they went abroad, 2 Sam. xii

the fountain that is called Gihon,* and there anoint him with holy oil, and pro-

claim him king.

This office being assigned to the highpriest and the prophet, command was further given that they should conduct him through the heart of the city with trumpets sounding before him, and multitudes of troops following with shouts and rejoicings, crying, 'Long live king Solomon!' to the end that the whole nation might be apprized that his father had declared him his successor.

David, on this solemn occasion, laid on his son the strict charge to govern not only the tribe of Judah, but the whole nation of the Israelites according to the strictest rules and measures of piety and justice.

Benaiah, after this, with an affectionate ejaculation for God's blessing upon Solomon, and the whole proceeding, went instantly away with the rest of the company, according to their order, to execute the office assigned them.

29. but David had a mule peculiar to himself, and the mounting Solomon upon it was a sufficient declaration in his favour. For, as it was capital (according to Maimonides) to ride upon the king's mule, or sit on his throne, or handle his sceptre without his order; so, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride upon the king's horse, by his appointment, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians, as appears by the story of Mordecai in the book of Esther.—Calmet's Commentary.

* Some commentators are of opinion that Gihon was the same with the fountain of Siloam; but this is a gross mistake, since Gihon was manifestly to the west, and Siloam to the east of Jerusalem. There is little or no certainty likewise in the notions of some Rabbins, who pretend that, in ancient times, kings were always anointed by the side of a fountain, by way of good omen, or that the perpetual running of the stream might be an emblem of the perpetuity of their king's reign. In the history of Saul, who was their first king, and of David, who was three times anointed, we find no mention made of any spring or fountain. As these fountains, however, were places of great concourse, (for there were not many in Jerusalem) the chief reason, we may imagine, why David ordered Solomon to be anointed at one of these, was, that the thing might be done as publicly, and in the presence of as many spectators, as possible.—Calmet's Commentary.

They mounted Solomon upon the king's mule; conducted him out of the city to the fountain; anointed him with holy oil, and then brought him back again, attended with the acclamations and the unanimous wishes of the people for his long and happy reign. They brought him afterward to the palace, and placed him upon his father's throne.

This solemnity being over, the people devoted themselves to jollity, feasting, music, dancing, and all other cheerful diversions, to such a degree of transport and rejoicing, that the clamour of their extravagant joy coming to the ears of Adonijah and his guests, it did not a little surprise them; Joab himself declaring that the noise he heard of shouts and trumpets did not at all please him; indeed, it gave such a damp to their jollity, and disrelish to their entertainment, that none of them had any appetite to enjoy what was before them.

While they were in this melancholy posture, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the high-priest, came running to them in great haste, and Adonijah, not apprehending the doleful purport of his message, but rather that he brought good news, received him cheerfully.

When Jonathan gave them the whole relation of the king's orders, and the proceeding concerning Solomon, they had no sooner heard the melancholy circumstance, than every man slinked away from the banquet to his own home. Adonijah indeed, conscious to himself of an indignity too great to be forgiven, fled for sanctuary to the horns of the altar,† and there begged for pardon.

[†] Though there is no precept in the law to make the altar a privileged place; yet in conformity to the customs of other nations, the Jews seem to have done it; for that other nations used this custom, appears from that passage in Virgil:

[&]quot;Twas thus he prayed, and thus the altars held."

And it seems not unlikely, that as the people, when they came to the land of Canaan, had cities appointed by God whereunto the manslayer might

When Solomon came to understand the fate of Adonijah, and that he insisted upon some security to be given him for an indemnity for punishment, with as much prudence as clemency he granted him a pardon for what was past; but with a precaution to beware how he behaved himself for the future; for if he should be found in any such practice again, his destruction should lie at his own door. Whereupon Solomon ordered him to be brought to him from his place of refuge; and when he had paid his duty and reverence to the new king, he bid him go to his own house again in peace, and to behave himself for the time to come like a good man, as he respected his own interest and welfare.

David, esteeming it necessary for the future peace and tranquillity of the kingdom, that Solomon should be proclaimed and recognised king of the whole nation of Israel; to effect which he summoned all the princes to Jerusalem, together with the priests and Levites, and found upon the roll thirty-eight thousand men among them that were above thirty years of age; out of which number there were twenty thousand to attend the building of the temple; judges and their clerks six thousand; four thousand porters belonging to the house of God, and as many singers and musicians, of which we have already hinted, he divided into families; and upon separating the priests from the rest of the tribe, he found twenty-four of them; that is, sixteen descended from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar; appointing every family to officiate eight days, as from sabbath to sabbath, and so to proceed in regular succession.

The lots of the whole were cast in the

flee; so, while they continued in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites might serve for the same purpose; and from the words in Exod. xxi. 14. where God ordered the wilful murderer 'to be taken from the altar that he may die,' it seems unquestionably true that even in the land of Canaan the altar continued a sanctuary for those who fled to it.

presence of David, and of the high-priests Zadok and Abiathar, together with the heads of the tribes; the course that came up first, being entered upon the roll as the first, and the second accordingly, and so on to the twenty-fourth, in order as it happened, which way of distribution continues in use to this day.

He divided the tribe of Levi also into twenty-four parts, to succeed one after another, according to the chance of the lot, in the same manner with the priests. But the preference was still given to the posterity of Moses, to whom were committed the custody of the holy treasure, and the disposal of the bounties and donations of princes and royal benefactors. He likewise ordered the whole tribe of Levi, and the priests, to attend the service of God, day and night in their turns, according to the institution of Moses.

Having thus judiciously divided the tribes, and appointed the manner in which they should respectively succeed to the sacred functions of the temple, he proceeded to the arrangement of his whole. army into twelve divisions, with their commanders in chief, tribunes, centurions, and their subordinates; every division to consist of twenty-four thousand men, and each of those divisions to do a month's duty in their respective courses, upon the guard of Solomon's palace, together with their tribunes and centurions; every part to have its distinct officer or judge; and ordained that he should be a man of approved integrity.

He appointed also overseers of the king's income, vineyards, lands, husbandry, flocks, and herds, &c. whom it would be too tedious here to recount.

When the king had brought things to this wise conclusion, he called a general assembly of the Hebrew magistrates, the princes of the tribes, the officers of the army, and the managers of the revenue; and then raising himself upon an eminence, spoke to the people from his throne to the following effect:

God in his providence, by the mouth of expected as the consequence." the prophet Nathan, to put a stop to my work. You know that our father Jacob had twelve sons; and that Judah was yet chosen by common consent to be ruler of all the rest. You know likewise, that I myself, though there were six brothers of ins, was advanced by God to the government, and that none of the rest thought themselves injured; wherefore I must now require in like manner of you, and of all my sons, that you submit cheerfully and dutifully to my son Solomon; and that you do it without any murmuring, faction, or civil dissension; for it is from God's immediate command and commission that he derives his authority. If that God should have set even a stranger over you, how great a folly and wickedness it would have been for you to murmur at it? But how thankful ought you now to be for the choice of so near a relation, when you yourselves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother. There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious promises take a speedy effect; and the whole people without any more delay put into a full and lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the reign of Solomon. All this, (addressing himself to Solomon,) my dear son, will

"I am now to give you to understand, be made good, and every thing succeed my countrymen and brethren, that I have to your wish, so long as you govern achad it a long time in my thought to erect cording to piety and justice, with a respect a temple to the Lord, and I treasured up to your duty both to God and man, upa great quantity of gold, and a hundred holding in the steps of your forefathers; thousand talents of silver toward the charge but whenever you transgress these bounds, of the undertaking; but it hath pleased there is nothing but misery and ruin to be

When David had finished his excellent design, upon this consideration, that he counsel, both to his people and son, conwould not have the foundation of his holy cerning the reciprocal duties they owed house laid by hands that had been dipped each other, in the presence of a mighty in blood, which mine have inevitably been, concourse, he delivered to the latter a though in the blood of your enemies, by draught of the form and model of the reason of the wars I have been forced into, temple,* from top to bottom, such as the in the righteous and necessary defence foundation and superstructure; the height and vindication of your liberties. But and breadth of the fabric; the private the prophet told me further, that God cells, their number and dimensions; what would transmit the care of it to my son vessels of gold and silver were to be proand successor, both to begin and finish the vided, with directions for their precise weight.

> He also exhorted him at the same time. with all diligence and application to prosecute the building; likewise pressing the princes and the tribes of Levi to contribute their assistance, not only in regard to his youth and want of experience, but out of reverence to his divine commission, which both entitled him to the government, and authorized and predetermined him to this province. And, as a farther encouragement, observed that it would not be a work of any great difficulty; for he had provided to their hand so many talents of gold, and more of silver, with stone and timber, earpenters, stone-cutters, and other workmen; a great treasure in emeralds, and other precious stones, over

^{*} That the architecture of the temple was of divine origin, I, for my part, am fully satisfied from the passage in 1 Chr. xxviii. 14., and am confirmed in this opinion by finding from Vilalpandus that the Roman, at least the Greek, architecture is derived from this, as from its fountain; and in my humble opinion even an infidel may easily believe these to be of divine original, inasmuch as they are, at least the latter is, found per fect in the earliest models; nor hath the utmost reach of human wisdom, invention, and industry, been ever able to improve it, or alter it but to disadvantage, through the course of so many ages .- Delaney.

and above; beside a further supply of three thousand talents* of the purest gold, out of his own treasury, for the adorning of the holy place, and the chariot of God, and the cherubin that were to cover the ark.

The assembly, pleased with the pious and spirited address of the king, unanimously concurred, both princes, people, and Levites, in their respective promotion of the arduous undertaking, and proposed very large contributions.

They offered among them to bring in five thousand talents+ of gold, ten thousand of silver, eighteen thousand talents of brass, and an immense mass of iron. They had also precious stones brought them into the treasury, where they were deposited in the custody of one Jehiel, of the race of Moses.

The people were infinitely pleased upon the whole, and David above all the rest, to see such an universal agreement and willingness, both in princes, priests, and people, towards carrying on the work; for which he blessed God with a loud voice, in the style of "Father, and Creator of heaven and earth; the governor and protector of the Israelites, and the blessed fountain of happiness to the people committed to his charge."

He concluded his devotions with a fervent prayer for the comfort and happiness of the nation; and with particular wishes of peace of conscience, and the blessing of an unspotted innocence and integrity on his son.

He then called upon the people to join with him in thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies; upon which they fell upon their faces, and worshipped; and coming

* Three thousand talents weighed three hundred. torty two thousand, one hundred and eighty seven pounds, and six ounces; and their value in gold amounted to sixteen millions, four hundred and twenty five thousand pounds, English money.

afterwards to David, made their acknowledgments for all the benefits and advantages they had enjoyed under his reign.

The day following was a great day of sacrifices; a thousand calves, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, for a burntoffering; and afterwards, many thousand victims more for peace-offerings. It was a day dedicated to feasting, both by the king and people.

Solomon was now a second time anointed, declared and recognised by the people, for their lawful king, and Zadok, by the voice of the whole multitude, appointed their high-priest.

Thus generally acknowledged by the common voice, Solomon was conducted to the palace, and placed upon his father's throne; from which day forward the people paid him true and faithful allegiance as king over Israel.

Good king David, finding himself decline daily, and perceiving that his dissolution approached, sent for his son Solomon, in order to bestow on him his last advice. and take his final leave.

When he approached his venerable father, he addressed him in this pious and pathetic strain: "Son, I am going to my fathers; and you that I leave behind me, are in due time to come to me; which is no more than the paying of the common debt to nature. There is no returning from the grave; and when we are gone, we have done with this world for ever. Wherefore while I am yet among the living, and before it be too late, let me remind you of the same things once again, that I have so often inculcated on you heretofore. Govern your subjects according to justice. Worship that God from whom you have received your dignity as well as your being, as you are bound to do. Observe his precepts, and keep his laws, as they have been handed down to you from Moses; and take care that you never forsake them, neither for fear, flattery, or any other passion or interest whatsoever. For otherwise, you can never

⁺ Five thousand talents weighed five hundred and seventy thousand, three hundred and twelve pounds, and six ounces; and their value in gold amounted to twenty seven millions, three hundred and seventy five thousand pounds, English money.

God's favour and providence. you behave yourself with reverence and submission towards God, as you ought to do, and as I wish you may do, your kingdom will be established to yourself, and the succession of it continued in your family from generation to generation. Let me now remind you of the iniquity of Joab,* in the murder of Abner, the son of Ner, and of Amasa, the son of Jether, two great captains and worthy men; and all this purely out of malice and envy. You may do by him as you think fit. The truth of it is, I had punished him myself, but that he was so popular I durst not meddle with him. As for the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, I must desire you for my sake to be very kind to them, and to do them all the good offices you can: not as an obligation, but

* From the instructions which David here gives to his son Solomon concerning Joab and Shimei, many have been led to think that he left the world in a very vindictive and unforgiving temper; but this misconception arises from nothing else but a want of distinguishing between the same person, when acting or advising in a public, and when in a private capacity. Joab does many valorous and brave acts for the honour of his king and the enlargement of his dominions, but then he sullies the whole by his barbarous murders, and insolent behaviour. Shimei curses David in the time of his troubles, and yet David forgives him, and promises he shall not die. They both of them had committed crimes enough to forfeit their lives; but David thinking it not advisable, for reasons of state, to seize either of them at present, directs his son, if ever they give him a sufficient provocation, not to spare them; and in so doing he is not to be considered as a private man, acting upon the principles of resentment, but as a king and governor, giving advice to his son and successor in affairs of state. It was for the public good that such offenders as Joab and Shimei should suffer at a proper time, and as providence should direct; and therefore, since his promise and oath to the one of them, and the formidable power and interest of the other, had restrained them in his lifetime from punishing them as they deserved; and since it would have been unjust in itself, and derogatory to the glory of his son's reign, to suffer such notorious crimes to go unpunished; he recommended to his son the consideration of those things, and, like a wise magistrate, laid a scheme for the punishment of wickedness, without regard to any private revenge.

pretend to hope for the blessings of in requital of the generous friendships I But if received from their father in the time of my banishment, which I reckoned as a debt incumbent upon our whole family. As for the son of Gera, Shimei the Benjamite that hunted me with such bitter cursing and reviling in the days of my persecution at Mahanaim, and afterwards meeting me at the river Jordan, obtained my pardon for it; you may take some warrantable occasion to punish him yet for that affront."

> Having thus delivered his sentiments and counsel to his son, both concerning his duty towards God, the administration of justice, the requiting of his friends, and the punishing of his enemies, David gave up the ghost, in about the 70th year of his age, after he had reigned seven years and six months over the tribe of Judah at Hebron, and thirty three years more over all Israel and Jerusalem.

> He was a man of great goodness, and endued with all the royal excellencies that could qualify a prince for the discharge of so great a trust. He was valiant, and often signalized his courage, both in single combat and general rencounters, exposing his person to the most imminent hazard in the defence of his people. He swaved his soldiers by his example, rather than by the rigour of his discipline. He was judicious in the choice of his councils; of a singular presence of mind; of sharp foresight in the improving all advantages, and the obviating of foreseen difficulties. To this he was temperate and sober, affable to all, tender towards the distressed, righteous and humane to all. He was a prince that never made an ill use of his power, saving only in the case of the wife of Uriah. He left a treasure to his successor greater than ever any other prince whatsoever left before him.

He was buried at Jerusalem, with all the solemnity of royal pomp and magnificence; and, to add to the splendour of the ceremony, his son Solomon deposited in his monument an estimable treasure.*

CHAPTER III.

Solomon's glorious accession to the throne of Israel.—Causes Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei, to be put to death, and Abiathar to be deposed from the priesthood, for their joint concur-

* After the account which Josephus gives us of David's death and burial, he informs us,-" That when Antiochus, surnamed the Pious, besieged Jerusalem, Hircanus, the high-priest, took from David's monument to the sum of three thousand talents, and therewith bribed him to raise the siege; and that, many years after, Herod, surnamed the Great, took another immense sum from thence, which enabled him to rebuild the temple." Among several nations indeed it was customary to bury, along with princes, and other great men, various things of value, that they took delight in while they lived. The Egyptians were used to this; and about their mummies are frequently found very precious ornaments. When Alexander the Great had Cyrus's tomb opened, there was found therein a bed of gold, a very rich table, drinking cups, and many fine vestments; but, notwithstanding all this, several learned men look upon this account of Josephus as a mere fable. For, to what purpose, say they, did Solomon bury all this treasure under ground when he had so much occasion for it; when he was forced to borrow money of the king of Tyre, and burden his people with so many heavy taxes to supply his excessive expenses? How came it, that the other kings of Judah who were frequently put to the necessity of stripping the temple of its precious furniture to satisfy their greedy enemies, never once adventured to lay hold on this treasure? How came it to escape the hands of the Chaldeans, and other nations, that so often had the plundering of Jerusalem? Or why should Hircanus violate this depositum, which his predecessors esteemed more sacred than the holy vessels of the Lord? These are questions that cannot easily be resolved; and, what is a farther confutation of this story, in that very book, from whence Josephus is supposed to have taken it, it is never once said that Hircanus broke open David's tomb. The words of that spurious author are, that Hircanus, "while he was besieged by Antiochus, opened a treasure-chamber, which belonged to some of David's descendants, and that, after he had taken a large sum of money out of it, ne still left a great deal in it and sealed it up again:" but this is quite a different thing, and has no manner of relation to the sepulchre of David. As to the real sepulchre of David, it is certain, that it was always held in great veneration among the Jews. It was in being in St Peter's time, for so he tells the people, Acts ii. 29. Dio informs us, that part of it was fallen down in the emperor Adrian's reign. St Jerome relates, that he himself used frequently to go and pray at it; and modern travellers describe some magnificent monuments hewed in a rock, not far from Jerusalem, which

rence, in endeavouring to obtain the crown for his elder brother.—Marries the daughter of the king of Egypt.—Gives evident tokens of his superior wisdom and power in divers acts of importance.—But is at length shamefully drawn into idolatry by the inordinate love of women.

DAVID, that eminent king of Israel, and servant of the most high God, having

are doubtless very ancient, but they themselves do not agree that they were the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. "Whoever," says Maundrell, " was buried there, this is certain, that the place itself discovers so great an expense both of labour and of treasure, that we may well suppose it to have been the work of kings. You approach it at the east side, through an entrance cut out of the natural rock, which admits you into an open court of about forty paces square, cut down into the rock, with which it is encompassed instead of walls. On the south side of the court, is a portico, nine paces long and four broad, hewn likewise out of the rock. This has a kind of architrave running along its front adorned with sculpture of fruits and flowers, still descernible, but by time much defaced. At the end of the portico on the left hand, you descend to the passage into the sepulchres. Passing through it, you arrive in a large apartment about seven or eight yards square, cut out of the natural rock. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect with levels and plummets could build a room more regular; and the whole is so firm and entire, that it may be called a chamber hollowed out of one piece of marble. From this room you pass into six more, one within another, all of the same fabric with the first. Of these the two innermost are deeper than the rest, having a second descent of about six or seven steps into them. In every one of these rooms, except the first, were coffins of stone placed in niches in the sides of the chambers. They had been at first covered with handsome lids, and carved with garlands; but now most of them are broken The sides and to pieces by sacrilegious hands. ceilings of the rooms were also dropping with the moist damps condensed upon them; to remedy which nuisance, and to preserve these chambers of the dead polite and clean, there was in each room a small channel cut in the floor, which served to drain the drops that fell constantly into it." It is somewhat unaccountable, however, that the place of this prince's sepulchre, which both the Chaldeans and the Romans, when they took Jerusalem, thought proper to spare, should now be so entirely lost that we cannot find the least remains of it. But though providence has so ordered it, that the place of David's sepulchre should not at present be known, yet there does not want an eternal monument of his most excellent genius. book of Psalms, which for the most part was composed by him, does publish the glory of its author more than the most pompous eulogies, and the author of Ecclesiasticus, chap. xlvii. 2, &c., has consecrated this epitaph to his memory, which is

done honour to his crown by the signal services he performed for his country, and left behind him a remarkable instance of singular piety towards God, and benevolence towards mankind, was at length wafted through the gloomy passage of death to that world of spirits, where bliss uninterrupted reigns for ever, and immortal minds are rendered completely happy, by a total deprivation of those passions which agitate the flesh, and are the inseparable companions of mortality.

Solomon his son ascended the throne of Israel by the decree of an overruling providence, and the special appointment of his deceased king and father, and with the universal acclamation of the people.

But Adonijah, who had made an attempt upon the government, during the life of his father, applied himself in an artful address to Bathsheba, the king's mother. She received him with great courtesy, and with large assurances of her assistance in any thing that might be in her power.

Upon this encouragement he came presently to his point, and thus bespoke her: "Great princess, I need not tell you, that if I were disposed to be troublesome upon the turn of government, the right of priority, and the good will of the people

more durable than either marble or brass :- 'As the fat is taken away from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from the people; for he called upon the most high Lord, and he gave strength to his right hand to slay this mighty warrior and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord; for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines, his adversaries: in all his works he praised the Holy One most high, and blessed the Lord with words of glory:—he set singers also before the altar, that, by their voices, they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order :--the Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel.'-Calmet's Commentary, &c.

would be on my side; but since it hath pleased God to devolve it upon your son Solomon, I am the king's humble servant, and shall content myself with the bounds of my present condition. I have only one thing to beg of you, which is, that you will be pleased to use your interest with your son, on my behalf, that I may be permitted to take Abishag to wife. She lay by my father David's side only to keep him warm in his extreme decay of heat, and undoubtedly he left her a virgin as he found her."

Bathsheba promised him the utmost in her power, and encouraged him to hope for success; for Solomon, she doubted not, would most readily agree to the joint request of his brother and his mother, in a greater matter than this appeared to be.

This was a pleasing promise to Adonijah from Bathsheba, who went directly to her son, to confer with him upon the matter.

Solomon rose up to meet his mother, and taking her in his arms, conducted her to his bed-chamber, where he placed her on his right-hand upon a chair of state. Bathsheba was no sooner seated, but she presently entered upon her business, and thus addressed the king: "Son, I have an humble suit to lay before you, and it would trouble me not a little if you should refuse it."

The king inquired the substance of it with apparent surprise, as if there were any thing for her to ask which a dutiful child could deny to his mother. He therefore entreated her to go on, and to depend on his readiness to comply with her desire in any thing he could do.

Thus encouraged she proceeded: "Son, I make it my request that you will give Abishag in marriage to your brother Adonijah."

The king started at this proposal in a surprise, and dismissed his mother with these words: "Adonijah has more ambitious designs in his head than the marrying of Abishag.* Why does he not speak | the same trouble. First, he desires Abiplain rather, and put in his claim to the kingdom, as elder brother; which he might as honestly have done, and with

. The wives of the late king (according to the customs of the East) belonged to his successor, and were never married to any under a crowned head. Abishag was doubtless a beautiful woman, and, by her near relation to David, might have a powerful interest at court; Adonijah might therefore hope, by this marriage to strengthen his pretensions to the crown, or, at least, to lay the foundation for some future attempt, upon a pro-per opportunity, either if Solomon should die, and leave a young son, not able to contest the point with him, or if, at any time, he should happen to fall under the people's displeasure, as his father had done before him. This might be Adonijah's design, and Solomon, accordingly, might have information of it: but supposing that his brother's design was entirely innocent, yet, since his request (according to the customs then prevailing) was confessedly bold and presumptuous, and had in it all the appearance of treason, it was none of Solomon's business to make any farther inquiry about it, or to interpret the thing in his brother's favour. It was sufficient for him, that the action was in itself criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state; for it is by their actions, and not intentions, that all offenders must be tried. Adonijah indeed, had he lived under our constitution, would have had a fair hearing before conviction: but we ought to remember, that, in the kingdoms of the East, the government was absolute, and the power of life and death entirely in the prince; so that Solomon, without the formality of any process, could pronounce his brother dead: and, because he conceived that in cases of this nature delays were dangerous, might send immediately, and have him despatched; though we cannot but say that it had been more to his commendation had he showed more clemency, and spared his life. Stackhouse.—The above, however, is rather too favourable a view of the conduct of Solomon in this matter. Dr Adam Clarke looks upon the transaction in a different light, and perhaps most will be inclined to agree with him. He remarks as follows:—" Some think that Joab and Abiathar had advised Adonijah to make the application, not doubting, if he got Abishag, that the popular tide would again turn in his favour, and that Solomon, whom they did not like, might soon be deposed; and that it was on this account that Solomon was so severe. But there is little evidence to support these conjectures. It does not appear that Adonijah by desiring to have Abishag had any thought of the king-dom, or of maintaining any right to it, though Solomon appears to have understood him in this sense. But without further evidence, this was a flimsy pretence to embrne his hands in a brother's blood. The fable of the wolf and lamb is here very applicable, and the old English proverb not less so: 'It is an easy thing to find a staff to beat a dog with.' We readily find an excuse for whatever we are determined to do."

shag in marriage; and then he has procured great friends and interest to support his pretensions; -such as Joab the general, Abiathar the high-priest, and others."

Solomon, deliberating upon the present state of things, sent Benaiah, the captain of the guard, with a commission forthwith to kill his brother; + and then ealling for Abiathar, the high-priest, he told him, that though he had deserved to die, yet in regard of the services he had done his father, and of the part he bore in bringing back the ark, his punishment should be only banishment. "Therefore," says he, "be gone immediately from this place, and let mine eyes never see you more. Betake yourself to your own home; fix your habitation in the country, and there continue to the day of your death. You have been false to me in joining with Adonijah, and for that fault this is your sentence. You have made yourself unworthy of the honour of the priesthood,

⁺ Executions in the East are often very prompt and arbitrary. In many cases the suspicion is no sooner entertained, or the cause of offence given, than the fatal order is issued; the messenger ot death hurries to the unsuspecting victim, shows his warrant, and executes his orders that instant in silence and solitude. Instances of this kind are continually occurring in the Turkish and Persian histories. "When the enemies of a great man among the Turks," says Harmer, "have gain-ed influence enough over the prince to procure a warrant for his death, a capidgi (the name of the officer who executes these orders) is sent to him, who shows him the order he has received to carry back his head; the other takes the warrant of the grand signior, kisses it, puts it on his head in token of respect, and then having performed his ablu-tions, and said his prayers, freely resigns his life. The capidgi having strangled him, cuts off his head, and brings it to Constantinople. The grand signior's order is implicitly obeyed; the servants of the victim never attempt to hinder the executioner, although these capidgis come very often with few or no attendants." It appears from the writings of Chardin, that the nobility and grandees of Persia are put to death in a manner equally silent, hasty, and unobstructed. From the dreadful promptitude with which Benaiah executed the commands of Solomon on Adonijah and Joab, it may be concluded that the executioner of the court was as little ceremonious, and the ancient Jews nearly as passive as the Turks or Persians -Paxton.

and from this time forward you shall exercise that function no more."

Abiathar thus dismissed from the sacerdotal office, that dignity devolved from the house of Ithamar (as God had foretold to Eli, the grandfather of Abiathar) into the family of Phinehas, being conferred on Zadok.

When Joab heard of the death of Adonijah, conscious of having cultivated his friendship, and studied his interest more than the king's, he had just ground to expect the resentment of Solomon, to evade which he fled for sanctuary to the altar; not doubting but that the veneration the king had for God, and for holy things, would be a protection to him.

When the king came to understand that Joab had taken sanctuary, he sent Benaiah to cite him to a court of justice, to answer for what he had done: but he refused to quit the altar, declaring, that if he must perish, he would rather die there than in any other place.*

Benaiah carried his answer to the king, who immediately ordered him to cut off his head where he was, and as a just punishment upon him for the detestable murders of Abner and Amasa, against all the ties of honour, humanity and justice, but gave it in charge to Benaiah, to see his body buried, for a memorial to posterity of so execrable a wickedness, and likewise to acquit both himself and father of any rigour in the death of Joab.

Benaiah, upon the execution of this commission, was made general in Joab's place; and upon the deposing of Abiathar the high-priest, the king assigned Zadok to succeed him.

Nor did Shimei escape his just resentment, for the king commanded him to build himself a house at Jerusalem, and not to stir out of it, or to pass the river Kidron upon the peril of his life; nay, he confirmed the solemn sentence with exacting an oath from Shimei, who, well satisfied with the conditions, swore to the observance of them. Hereupon he quitted his own country, and came and dwelt at Jerusalem.

About three years after, it happened that two of Shimei's servants ran away from him; and the master hearing that they were at Gath, took a journey thither, in order to fetch them back.

Upon his return with his servants the king received intelligence of it, and, highly incensed at the affront offered his regal dignity in thus contemptuously transgressing the positive command, (even after so solemn an oath on the observance of it,) thus severely chastised the delinquent:

"Shimei, didst thou not swear to me that thou wouldest never stir out of this city into any other, to the day of thy death? and like a false wretch, thou hast now broken that sacred oath, and for that perjury shalt die. Take this for thy instruction too, that Divine vengeance, sooner or later, finds out the criminal; and

^{*} The altars were so sacred among all the people that, in general, even the vilest wretch found safety, if he once reached the altar. This led to many abuses, and the perversion of public justice; and at last it became a maxim that the guilty should be punished, should they even have taken refuge at the altars. God decreed that the presumptuous murderer who had taken refuge at the altar should be dragged thence, and put to death; see Exod. xxi. 14. Joab must have been both old and infirm at this time, and now he bleeds for Abner, he bleeds for Amasa, and he bleeds for Uriah. The two former he murdered; of the blood of the latter he was not innocent: yet he had done the state much service, and they knew it. But he was a murderer, and vengeance would not suffer such to live.—Dr A. Clarke.

[†] These servants were probably such as he had purchased with a considerable sum of money, and their running away was not only a loss, but a great affront likewise to their master; and therefore partly out of rage, and partly through covetousness, he undertook this dangerous journey, presuming that a thing which might be done so secretly and speedily would never come to Solomon's ears; that in the space of three years' time, Solomon might have forgot his injunction; or that if he remembered it, he would not be so right as to put it in execution; especially as he went not out of Jerusalem, through wantonness, or any contempt of authority, but merely to recover what he had lost, which he might think was a thing very excusable.

that it aggravates the delayed vengeance. The hand of God is in this judgment upon thee, not only for thy late perjury, but for thy sins of ancient date; I mean the insolencies against my father in the depth of his distresses. Think of this, and remember that God is just." Benaiah then put Shimei to death by the king's

Solomon not only ascended the throne of his father David with great glory and splendour, but swaved the royal sceptre without control. He had punished those who arrogantly endeavoured to deprive him of his government, conciliated the universal affection of his people, and settled every point necessary to general happiness.

In this interval of profound peace, both at home and abroad, he took to wife the daughter of the king of Egypt,* applied

* Whatever augmentation of power he might promise himself from this alliance, he certainly ran the hazard of having his religion corrupted by this unlawful mixture. It has been observed, how-ever, that as the sacred scriptures commend the beginning of Solomon's reign, in all other respects, except the 'people's sacrificing in high places,' which might be the rather tolerated, 'because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord, in those days;' and as they gave him this character, that 'he loved the Lord, and walked in all the statutes of David his father,' he would never have done an act so directly contrary to the laws of God, as marrying an idolatrous princess, had she not been first proselyted to the Jewish faith. The scripture indeed takes notice of the gods of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Zidonians, for whom Solomon, in compliance to his strange wives, built places of worship: but, as there is no mention made of any gods of the Egyptians, it seems very likely that this princess, when she was espoused to Solomon, quitted the religion of her ancestors, to which these words in the psalm, supposed to be written upon this occasion, ' Hearken, O my daughter, forget thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty, for he is the Lord,' are thought by some to be no distant allusion. However this be, it is certain that we find Solomon no where reproved in scripture for this match; nor can we think, that his book of Canticles (which is supposed to be his epithalamium) would have found a place in the sacred canon, had the spouse, whom it tall along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress; though there is reason to believe, that she afterwards relapsed into her ancient religion, and contributed, as much as any, to the

that forbearance is so far from an acquittal, | himself to the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, which he made much larger and stronger than they were before, and every other business that could aggrandize his own glory, and contribute to the happiness and welfare of his people.

> He was young, indeed, but want of years prevented him not from doing justice, or the execution of the laws, or paying a religious reverence to the authority of his dying father's precepts; for, in a word, such was the pregnancy, even of his early youth, that he ruled every thing with a judgment that might have become the most consummate experience.

> Reflecting on the goodness of the God of his father in raising him to the throne of Israel, and blessing him with peace and plenty, the approbation and love of his subjects, with all that could contribute to his happiness, he thought himself bound to address God by prayer and sacrifice, in acknowledgment of these mercies; thereupon he went to Gibeon, where he offered upon Moses's brazen altar, long since erected there, a thousand victims for a burnt-offering.+

> This piety and zeal were so acceptable to God, that the very night following he appeared unto him in a dream; and to

> king's seduction, and the many great disorders that were in the latter part of his reign.—Stack-

+ Without having recourse to the many forced I shall only observe, that there is not the least in-timation given us, that all these sacrifices were offered in one day; and therefore it is doing no injury to the sacred text to suppose, that this was one of the great festivals which Solomon might think proper to hold at Gibeon, and that he continued there, until, by the daily oblations, this

number of burnt-offerings were consumed.

‡ Sleep is like a state of death to the soul, wherein the senses are locked up, and the understanding and will deprived of the free exercise of their functions; and yet this is no impediment to God in communicating himself to mankind: for 'God speaketh once, yea twice, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instructions:" for God, no doubt, has power, not only to awaken our intellectual faculties, but to advance them above their ordinary measure of perception, even

show him that the services of his heart and good-will should not go unrewarded, bade him ask what he would and it should be granted him.

Solomon pitched upon the greatest and the most valuable thing he could think of, and that which he concluded would be most agreeable to the approbation of the giver, and at the same time most advantageous to the receiver. It was not silver, nor gold, nor any thing of those vanities to which youthful minds are generally attached, that he chose as the only thing worth asking; but he thus entreated the Lord: "Lord, grant me a right apprehension of matters, and a sound judgment, that may enable me to govern this people according to truth and justice."

while the body is asleep. Gregory Nyssen, speaking of the different kinds of dreams, has observed, that the organs of our body and our brain are not unlike the strings of a musical instrument. While the strings are screwed up to a proper pitch, they give an harmonious sound, if touched by a skilful hand; but, as soon as they are relaxed, they give none at all. In like manner, while we are awake, (says he) our senses, touched and directed by our understanding, make an agreeable concert; but when once we are asleep, the instrument has done sounding, unless it be, that the remembrance of what passed, when we are awake, comes and presents itself to the mind, and so forms a dream, just as the strings of an instrument will for some time continue their sound even after the hand of the artist has left them. It is no hard matter to apply this to Solomon's dream. He had prayed the day before with great fervency, and desired of God the gift of wisdom. In the night-time God appeared to him in a dream, and bid him ask whatever he would. Solomon, having his mind still full of the desire of wisdom, asked it, and obtained it: so that the prayer, or desire, which he uttered in his dream, was but the consequence of the option he had made the day before, when he was awake. In a word, though we should allow, that the soul of man, when the body is asleep, is in a state of rest and inactivity, yet we cannot but think that God can approach it many different ways; can move and actuate it just as he pleases; and when he is minded to make a discovery of any thing, can set such a lively representation of it before the eyes of the man's understanding, as shall make him not doubt of the reality of the vision .- Stuckhouse.

* Hereupon some Jewish annotators have observed, that though Solomon, in his great modesty, might request of God no more than the gift of government, or (as he expresses it) 'an understanding heart to judge the people, and to discern between good and evil,' yet God, out of his abundant

This choice was so acceptable to God, that he not only promised him what he desired, but riches and glory besides, assuring him that he would confer upon him such an exalted degree of understanding, and such practical wisdom, as no man, either public or private, could ever pretend to before him; and adding, that upon condition of his continuing just to the world, obedient in all things to God, treading in the steps, and imitating the eminent virtues of his father, the government should remain in his family for many ages.

Upon these words he awoke, rose out of his bed, worshipped, gave thanks, and then returned to Jerusalem, where he sacrificed to God before the tabernacle, and feasted all his people.

About this time there was a difficult cause brought before him, which is particularly worthy of general observation, as it displays the extraordinary wisdom and justice of Solomon, and holds forth a shining example to all succeeding princes.

There came to the king two common woment for justice. The plaintiff told

grace, gave him a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history informs us: and that whereas other men gather their knowledge from study and observation. Solomon had his by an immediate inspiration from God, insomuch, that 'he, who went to bed as ignorant as other men, awaked in the morning like an angel of God.' But though his knowledge of things was, in a great measure, infused, yet he did not therefore neglect his study; 'He gave his heart to seek, and search out by wisdom, concerning all things under the sun;' in which search, as himself testifies, Eccl. 13. he took no small pains: so that his gifts extraordinary did not supersede the use of other means in the acquisition of knowledge, but by application and experience he perfected what he had so advantageously received from the hands of God.—Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

† These two women are said in the text to be harlots, but the Hebrew word (as we took notice in the case of Rahab) may equally signify an hostess, or one who kept a house of public entertainment; and that it is so to be taken here we have these reasons to presume: that as all public prostitution was severely forbidden by the law. Deut. xxiii. 17. women of this infamous character durst not have presented themselves before so just and so wise a king; that women of this lewd behaviour seldom do become mothers of children,

her tale, to this effect: "This woman and I lived both in a lodging, and it was our fortune to be delivered each of us of a male child, on the same day and hour. Within three days this woman having overlaid her own child, and smothered it, took mine softly out of my arms as I was asleep, and laid hers in the place of it. Early the next morning when I was about to suckle my own infant, the child was not to be found, but a dead one in its place; for I know my own child by most infallible marks. I have pressed her for my child; but she keeps it from me, and bears me down that it is her child still, and I have no witness to prove the contrary. Now, Sir, I humbly beseech your majesty to see justice done betwixt us."

The king then addressed himself to the other woman, demanding of her what she had to allege in her own behalf. She answered, she laid no such child there, but the living child was her own, and so stood upon her justification.

The attendants in general were greatly dubious on whom to fix the imputation of injustice, till the king thought of this expedient. He ordered the living child to be brought, and one of his guards to take his sword, cut the infant in two, just in the middle, and divide it betwixt the two pretended mothers, half to the one, and half to the other.*

and when they chance to have any, are not so solicitous for their preservation, but rather rejoice when they have got rid of them. There is no reason to suppose then, that these women were common harlots; and yet it is generally thought that they were both unmarried persons, and guilty of fornication, because no mention is made of their husbands, whose office it was (if they had any) to contest the matter for their wives.—Poole's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.

* Solomon knew at once, that the only sign that would discover the true, would be her affection, and compassion, and tenderness for her child, and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of this; and if we suppose, that, when he commanded the child to be divided, he spake with a sedate countenance and seeming earnestness, (as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent that he did) then we may suppose farther, not only the two women, but all the people present with hor-

This, at first, was deemed a very idle stratagem, till one of the women crying out earnestly, begged that her companion might have the child, and pass for the mother of it, provided that its life might be spared, and she have the comfort of seeing it yet amongst the living.

The other woman quietly submitting to the proposal, and not without some seeming satisfaction at the calamity of her neighbour, the king adjudged the child to the right woman upon the evidence of her tenderness and natural affection; highly condemning the wickedness of the other, who, after that she had killed her own child, did what she could to destroy that of her neighbour.

This was so singular an instance of the king's wisdom and justice, that from that day forward the people honoured and obeyed him as a prince that acted by the

rot and admiration expecting the execution of the thing; which, when it ended in so just a decision quite contrary to what they looked for, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge : and yet Abarbinel, the Jewish commentator, thinks, that all this was no great proof of Solomon's extraordinary wisdom, nor could it beget that fear or reverence, which the text says (1 Kings iii. 28.) it procured to his person. His opinion therefore is, that Solomon made a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment; that, by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secret of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterwards was only to notify to the company what he before had discovered. However this be, it may not be improper, upon this occasion, to mention an instance or two out of profane history, of a singular address (though much inferior to this) in discovering such secrets as seemed to be past finding out. To this purpose, Suctonius (in his Life of Claudian, cap. 15.) tells us, how that emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not own for her son, by commanding her to be married to him; for the horror of committing incest obliged her to declare the truth; and, in like manner, Diodorus Siculus relates how Ariopharnes, king of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, found out the true son and heir by ordering them to shoot, each man his arrow, into the dead king's body, which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the true claimant.—Poole's Annotations, Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

Solomon then proceeded to take a list of his officers, civil, military, and ecclesi-

astical in his provinces.

There was Uri, the son of Hur, in the tribe of Ephraim, including Bethlehem; the son of Abinadab, son-in-law to Solomon, had the command of Dor, and the sea coast; the great plain was under Baana, the son of Ahilud, and so as far as to the river Jordan; the son of Geber had the government of the Gileadites, as far as Mount Lebanon, within which command there were sixty large and well fortified cities; Abinadab, that married Basmath, another of Solomon's daughters, had the government of Mahanaim, which comprehends all Galilee up to Sidon; under Baanah was the government of the sea coast about Asher; Jehoshaphat commanded the mountains of Issachar, and all the lower Galilee, to the farther side of Jordan; the whole country of the Benjamites was under the government of Shimei; and the land beyond Jordan was under Tabar. These were Solomon's governors, and he had one lieutenantgeneral to superintend them all.

So soon as the people found themselves settled in a state of peace and plenty, and out of fear of any distractions by war or tumult, they gave themselves up to husbandry and improvements; and in a short time advanced their fortunes and possessions (the tribe of Judah especially) to the astonishment of the world.

The king had likewise other officers over the Assyrians, and other barbarous nations, between Egypt and Euphrates,*

guidance and direction of a divine im- to whom he committed the care of his subsidies, those people being tributaries to him.

> The daily proportion of provisions that these people furnished every day for the king's own table and entertainment, was thirty homers+ of fine flour, threescore homers of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred fat lambs, besides deer, birds, fish, and game in vast abundance.

> He had so prodigious a number of chariots, that there were forty thousand stalls provided for the horses that belonged to them, t over and above twenty thousand horsemen that were of his guards; one half being quartered in Jerusalem,

> Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean; as indeed, without such a number of tributary kingdoms, we cannot conceive how the country of Israel could have furnished such a constant supply of provisions, and other things necessary for the support of this prince's grandeur .- Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

> † A homer, or core, contained about six hundred and five pints English measure; thirty of which amounted to eighteen thousand, one hundred and fifty English pints, and threescore to thirty-six thousand and three hundred. This word in scripture is translated measures. computed that here was bread enough for 3000 persons. The great number of beasts daily required in Solomon's kitchen will by no means be found incredible, when we compare it with the accounts of the daily consumption of oriental courts in modern times, and the prodigious number of servants of an Asiatic prince. Thus, Tavernier, in his description of the seraglio, says, that five hundred sheep and lambs were daily required for the persons belonging to the court of

> ‡ In 2 Chron. ix. 25. the number is stated at four thousand: which is supposed to relate to the stalls or stables only, while the number here relates to the horses contained in them. However, it is thought by some that the Hebrew word here used will admit of being translated four, as well as forty. In excuse for Solomon's having so great a number of war horses, (contrary to the law in Deut. xvii. 16,) it is alleged, that he kept them, not out of pride or vanity, but merely as a necessary guard to his kingdom against the incursions of the Philistines. Perhaps, however, though this account is given in the beginning of his reign, it refers to what took place towards the latter part of it; so that it may have been as great a fault in him to multiply horses, as to multiply wives and concubines; both being done at the same time of his life, and prohibited in the same law, Deut. xvii. 16. 17.—Pyle.

^{*} The sacred historian tells us that 'Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt,' 1 Kings iv. 21. for the bounds of his kingdom were to the east, the Euphrates, which is here, and in other places of scripture, called the river, without any addition; to the west, the country of , the Philistines, which bordered upon the Mediterranean sea; and to the south, Egypt. So that Solomon had tributary to him the kingdoms of

the expense of the king's table, was appointed also to provide necessaries for the king's house wherever he went.

The wisdom of Solomon, proceeding immediately from the fountain of knowledge, and origin of all science, was so far superior to the philosophy and highest attainments of the most learned of his cotemporaries, that his pre-eminence was acknowledged by the most renowned scholars, both among the Egyptians and Hebrews.*

This extraordinary prince composed three thousand proverbs,+ and his songs

* There were three nations in the east of Canaan, that were very famous for their wisdom and erudition; the Chaldeans, beyond the Euphrates; the Persians, beyond the Tigris; and the Arabians, on the nearer side of the Euphrates, a little towards the south: but whether the Persians and Chaldeans were remarkable for their learning in Solomon's days, is much doubted among com-mentators. The book of Job sufficiently shows, that the Arabians (for of that nation was Job and his friends) were famous for their learning in ancient times; and as to the Chaldeans and other oriental people, since the sons of Noah took up their habitation about Babylon, and the neighbouring countries, it is reasonable to suppose, that where mankind first began to settle themselves into regular societies, there arts and sciences first began to appear. The Egyptians however pretend to a precedency in this, and several other accomplishments. They say, that the Chaldeans received the principles of philosophy at first from a colony that came from Egypt, as Diodorus indeed makes mention of such a colony, conducted by Belus: but the Chaldeans, on the other hand, maintain, that from them it was, that the Egyptians received their first instructions, and (according to some) that Abraham was the person who first communicated to the Chaldeans the knowledge of astronomy, and other sciences. However this be, Solomon received from God a perfect knowledge of all that useful and solid learning, for which the Eastern people and the Egyptians were justly famed; for (as it follows) he was a great moral philosopher, a great natural philosopher, and an excellent poet.—Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

† Josephus, who loved to magnify every thing that concerned Solomon, instead of three thousand proverbs, tells us that Solomon composed three thousand books of proverbs; the greater certainly is our loss, (if the thing were credible) because all the proverbs of Solomon that we have now, are comprised in the book that goes under that name, and in Ecclesiastes; and yet some learned critics

near his person, and the other half distri- were a thousand and five. THe wrote buted into out-villages, near the city; and the history of plants, from the cedar to the same officer that was commissary for the hyssop; also of cattle and beasts of the earth; water-fowl, and birds of the air; for he understood the nature of all these creatures, and studied and refined upon their respective properties and dispositions. ||

> are of opinion, that the nine first chapters of the book of Proverbs were not of Solomon's composure, and that the number of proverbs which properly belong to him is no more than six hundred and fifty .- Grotius's Annotations, and Cal-

met's Commentary.

‡ These, one would think, were poems enough, for a person that had so much more other business as king Solomon had; but Josephus, who is never content, makes him the author of so many volumes of poetical composition; and the Septuagint indeed, as well as other interpreters, make the number of them to be no less than five thousand songs, or odes: but, of all this number, we have none remaining but the Song of Songs, as it is called; except the hundred and twenty-sixth psalm, which (in its Hebrew title) is ascribed to Solomon, may be supposed to be one of these. The psalter of Solomon, which contains eighteen psalms, a work that was found in Greek in the library of Augsburg, and has been translated into Latin by John Lewis de la Cerda, is supposed by the learned to be none of Solomon's, but of some Hellenistical Jew, much conversant in reading the sacred authors, and who had composed them in imitation of the psalms of David, whose style he closely pursued, and had inserted several passages of the prophets, especially of Isaiah and Ezekiel, which he accommodated well enough to his purpose. However this be, these eighteen psalms were not unknown to the ancients; for they were formerly in the famous Alexandrian Manuscript, as may be seen by the index which is still to be found at the end of the New Testament, though the psalms themselves have either been torn out of the book, or lost by some accident .- Le Clerc and Calmet.

|| The several books, which treated of the nature and virtue of animals, as well as plants, are supposed to have been lost in the Babylonish captivity; but Eusebius (as he is quoted by Anastasius) informs us, that king Hezekiah, seeing the abuse which his subjects made of Solomon's works, by placing too much confidence in the remedies which he prescribed, and the natural secrets which he discovered, thought proper to suppress them all. Notwithstanding this, since his time, many books, concerning the secrets of magic, medicine, and enchantments, have appeared under the name of this prince; and several pieces have been quoted, such as 'The Instructions of Solomon to his Son Rehoboam;' 'The Testament of Solomon;' 'The Book of the Throne of Solomon;' 'The Books of Magic, composed by the Dæmons under the Name of Solomon;' 'The Clavicula, or Key of Solomon;' 'The Ring of Solomon;' 'The Contradiction of

(by a gift from above) but likewise improve his knowledge and understanding of these things, for the help and benefit of mankind, even to the confusion of evil spirits.

When the fame of Solomon's wisdom reached the ears of Hiram, king of Tyre, who had ever retained the warmest affection for his father David, that prince sent an embassy to congratulate him on his accession to the throne of Israel, and on the favourable presage of his future prosperity, expressing at the same time the most ardent desire that the government might long continue in the family. Solomon received the ambassadors very cordially, and despatched by them the following address to the king their master :-

"King Solomon to king Hiram, greeting .- Be it known unto thee, O king, that my father David had it a long time in his mind and purpose to build a temple to the Lord; but being perpetually in war, and under a necessity of clearing his hands of his enemies, and making them all his tributaries, before he could attend this great and holy work, he hath left it to me in a time of peace both to begin and to finish it, according to the direction, as well as the prediction, of Almighty God. Blessed be his great name for the present tranquillity of my dominions; by his gracious assistance, I shall now dedicate the best improvements of this liberty and leisure to his honour and worship: wherefore I make it my request, that you will let some of your people go with some

Solomon,' &c., which were most of them very wicked and pernicious tracts, to which the authors prefixed this great name, to give them more credit and sanction. It is somewhat strange, however, that Josephus should inform us, that Solomon composed books of enchantments, and several manners of exorcisms, or of driving away devils, so that they could return no more; and that he should further assure us, that himself had seen experiments of it by one Eleazar, a Jew, who, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, and the officers of his army, cured several that were possessed.— Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. and Calmet's Dictionary.

Nor did he only know and understand servants of mine to mount Lebanon, to assist them in cutting down materials towards this building; for the Sidonians understand it much better than we do. for the workmen's wages, whatever you think reasonable shall be punctually paid them."

> Hiram was exceedingly pleased with Solomon's letter, and returned him the following answer:

"King Hiram to king Solomon .- Nothing could have been more welcome to me than to understand that the government of your pious father is devolved, by God's providence, into the hands of so excellent, so wise, and so virtuous a successor; his holy name be praised for it. That which you write for shall be done with all care and good-will; for I will give order to cut down, and to export such quantities of the fairest cedars and cypresstrees, as you shall have occasion for. My people shall bring them to the sea-side for you, and from thence ship them away to what port you please, where they may lie ready for your men to transport them to Jerusalem. It would be a great obligation, after all this, to allow us such a provision of corn in exchange, as may suit your convenience; for that is the commodity we islanders want most."

When king Solomon had received and perused the contents of Hiram's letter, he was pleased with the benevolence of disposition and goodness of heart therein displayed; that, as a token of his esteem and respect, he ordered him a yearly present of two thousand omers of wheat, two thousand vessels of oil, and as many of wine, of seventy-two quarts apiece. This was the first earnest of friendship betwixt the two kings, which continued to increase to the last, every day firmer and

The king ordered his people to provide him thirty thousand workmen, which he disposed of in such an easy method that their labour should not be grievous to them.

sand, and their post was to do duty for one month, by ten thousand at a time, in cutting down wood upon mount Lebanon,*

The number of them was thirty thou- and to be relieved at the month's end by the second ten thousand, and the second, after another month, by the third; so that they had two months' liberty to be at their

* Lebanon, by the Greeks and Latins termed Libanus, is a long chain of limestone mountains, on the summits of which fossilised antediluvian fishes were formerly discovered; extending from the neighbourhood of Sidon on the west to the vicinity of Damascus eastward, and forming the extreme northern boundary of the Holy Land. Anciently, it abounded with odoriferous trees of various descriptions, from which the most curious gums and balsams were extracted. It is divided into two principal ridges or ranges parallel to each other, the most westerly of which is known by the name of Libanus, and the opposite or eastern ridge by the appellation of Anti-Libanus: but the Hebrews do not make this distinction of names, denominating both summits by the common name of Lebanon. These mountains may be seen from a very considerable distance, and some part or other of them is covered with snow throughout On the loftiest summit of all, Dr Clarke observed the snow lying, not in patches, as he had seen it during the summer upon the tops of very elevated mountains; but investing all the higher part with that perfect white and smooth velvet-like appearance which snow only exhibits when it is very deep-a striking spectacle in such a climate, where the beholder, seeking protection from a burning sun, almost considers the firmament to be on fire. These mountains are by no means barren, but are almost all well cultivated, and well peopled: their summits are, in many parts, level, and form extensive plains, in which are sown corn, and all kinds of pulse. They are watered by numerous cold flowing springs, rivulets, and streams of excellent water, which diffuse on all sides a freshness and fertility even in the most elevated regions. To these Solomon has a beautiful allusion, Song iv. 15. Vineyards, and plantations of mulberry, olive, and fig-trees are also cultivated on terraces formed by walls, which support the earth from being washed away by the rains from the sides of the acclivities. The soil of the declivities and of the hollows that occur between them is most excellent and produces abundance of corn, oil, and wine; which is as much celebrated in the East in the present day as it was in the time of the prophet Hosea, who particularly alludes to it, chap. xiv. 7. Lebanon was anciently celebrated for its stately cedars, which are now less numerous than in former times; they grow among the snow near the highest part of the mountain, and are remark-able, as well for their age and size, as for the frequent allusions made to them in the scriptures. These trees form a little grove by themselves, as if planted by art, and are seated in a hollow amid rocky eminences all around them, and form a small wood, at the foot of the ridge, which forms the highest peak of Lebanon. The number of the largest trees has varied at different times. To omit the varying numbers stated by the earlier travellers:—the Rev. Henry Maundrell, who travelled in this region in 1696, reckoned sixteen of

the largest size, one of which he measured, and found it to be twelve yards and six inches in girth, and yet sound; and thirty-seven yards in the spread of the boughs. The celebrated oriental traveller, Mr Burckhardt, who traversed mount Libanus in 1810, counted eleven or twelve of the oldest and best looking trees, twenty-five very large ones, about fifty of middling size, and more than three hundred smaller and young ones. Mr Bucking-ham, in 1816, computed them to be about two hundred in number, twenty of which were very In 1817-18 captains Irby and Mangles stated that there might be about fifty of them, not one of which had much merit either for dimensions or beauty; the largest among them appearing to be the junction of four or five trunks into one tree. Dr Richardson, in 1818, stated the oldest trees to be no more than seven. The oldest trees were distinguished by having the foliage and small branches at the top only, and by four, five, or even seven trunks springing from one base; the branches and trunks of the others were lower: the trunks of the old trees were covered with the names of travellers and other persons who have visited them, some of which are dated as far back as 1640. trunks of the oldest trees, the wood of which is of a grey tint, seemed to be quite dead. These cedars were the resort of eagles, as the lofty summits of the mountains were the haunts of lions and other beasts of prey, which used to descend and surprise the unwary traveller. But instead of these, the traveller may now frequently see the hart or the deer issue from his covert to slake his thirst in the streams that issue from the mountains. To this circumstance David beautifully alludes in Psal. xlii. 1., which was composed when he was driven from Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom, and was wandering among these mountains. Finally, Mr Carne, in 1825, states that the forests, the cedar-trees, the glory of Lebanon, have in a great measure disappeared, to make way for innumerable plantations of vines.

Anti-Libanus or Anti-Lebanon is the more lofty ridge of the two, and its summit is clad with almost perpetual snow, which was carried to the neighbouring towns for the purpose of cooling liquors, a practice which has obtained in the East to the present day. Its rock is primitive calcareous, of a fine grain, with a sandy slate upon the higher parts: it affords good pasturage in many spots where the Turkmans feed their cattle, but the western declivity towards the district of Baalbec is quite barren. The most elevated summit of this ridge was by the Hebrews called Hermon; by the Sidonians Sirion; and by the Amorites, Shenir: it formed the northern boundary of the country beyond Jordan. Very copious dews fall here as they also did in the days of the Psalmist. In Deut. iv. 48. this mountain is called Sion, which has been supposed to be either a contraction, or a faulty reading for Sirion: but bishop Pococke thinks it probable that Hermon was the name of the highest own homes; and thus in a circle, every fourth month, each ten thousand were to take their turn over again. Their inspector-general, or superintendent, was Adoniram

Besides these, there were seventy thousand foreigners, formerly designed by David for the carrying of stones and other materials, eighty thousand stone cutters and masons, and three thousand and three hundred overseers of the work. Their order was to make use of the largest stones they could get for the foundation, and to have them squared and ready wrought upon the mountains where they were quarried, and thence to be carried whole to Jerusalem, in which injunction Hiram's men were concerned as well as the rest.

Solomon was now in the fourth year of his reign* when he began this mighty

summit of this mountain, and that a lower part of it had the name of Sion. This obviates the geo-graphical difficulty which some interpreters have imagined to exist in Psal. cxxxiii. 3. where mount Sion is mentioned in connection with Hermon, and is generally understood to be mount Sion in Jerusalem, which was more than thirty miles Both Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon are computed to be about fifteen or sixteen hundred fathoms in height, and offer a grand and magnificent prospect to the beholder; Lebanon was justly considered as a very strong barrier to the land of promise, and opposing an almost insurmountable obstacle to the movements of cavalry and to chariots of war. When, therefore, Sennacherib, in the arrogance of his heart, and the pride of his strength, wished to express the ease with which he had subdued the greatest difficulties, and how vain was the resistance of Hezekiah and his people, he says: 'By the multitude of my chariots have I come to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon! and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof; and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel. What others accom-plish on foot, with much labour and the greatest difficulty, by a winding path cut into steps, which no beast of burden, except the cautious and surefooted mule, can tread, that haughty monarch vaunted he could perform with horses and a multitude of chariots. During the latter period of the Roman empire, Lebanon afforded an asylum to numerous robbers, who infested the neighbouring regions, so that the eastern emperors found it necessary to establish garrisons there .-Horne's Introd.

• If it be asked, why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner, and even in the

work; and of that year the second month, which the Macedonians called Artemisius, and the Hebrews Zif; four hundred and eighty years from the Israelites' coming out of Egypt; a thousand and twenty years from Abraham's coming out of Mesopotamia into the land of Canaan; fourteen hundred and forty from the deluge; and from the creation of the world, three thousand one hundred and two. It was also in the eleventh year of Hiram, the king of Tyre; and two hundred and forty years after the building of that city.

Josephus, in his description of the temple, says, "The foundation was laid prodigiously deep; and the stones not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to resist the assault of wind and rain; besides, that they were so wrought one in another, and wedged in the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis was not less admirable than the bulk and ornament of the intended superstructure, and one was in all respects answerable to the beauty and magnificence of the other.

"The walls were all of a white stone from the ground to the ceiling. The height of the building was sixty cubits (or a hundred and five feet), the length as much, and the breadth twenty (or thirtyfive feet); over which there was another stage of the same dimensions; so that the

first year of his reign, since his father had left him a plan, and all things necessary for the undertaking? Abarbinel's answer is, that Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared, but was resolved to build this temple all at his proper cost and charge. He therefore put into the treasure of the Lord's house all that David had dedicated to the work; and, to gather together as much gold and silver as was necessary to defray so vast an expense, four years can be accounted no unreasonable time. Nay, even suppose that he made use of the treasure which his father had amassed, yet, if the materials that his father had provided lay at a considerable distance, and were left rude and unfashioned, it would cost all this time to form them into the exact symmetry, wherein the scripture represents them, before they were brought together, especially considering that the very stones which made the foundation were very probably vast blocks of marble, or porphyry, 1 Kings v. 17. And all polished in the most exquisite manner .-Patrick's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.

whole height of the building was a hun- | ed and accommodated, one piece to anodred and twenty cubits. Its front was toward the east.

"The porch, or court next to the entrance, was twenty cubits in length, to answer the temple; ten in breadth, and a hundred and twenty cubits in height.

"There was built round about it, and against the outward walls, like so many buttresses to support it, thirty cells, or little houses, in the form of galleries opening one into another. The length and breadth of these cells was five cubits each and the height twenty. And there were two other floors over this, of the same make and proportion, amounting all together to the just height of the lower part of the fabric: for these cells or galleries went no higher than the top of the first story. They were all ceiled with cedar, and every partition had its covering apart, independent one of another; they were all likewise fastened together, by long and large beams, in such a manner that they looked but like one piece, and as if the very walls were the stronger for them. Under these beams were several curious varieties of carving and fret work, gilding, &c. The walls were all wainscotted with cedar, and so adorned with works in gold so as to make the most splendid appearance imaginable.

"The whole frame was raised upon stones polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially constructed, that there was no joint to be discerned, nor the least sign of a hammer, or of any working tool; * all things being so adjustther beforehand, that upon the whole it looked more like the work of Providence and nature, than the product of art or human invention.

"As the second story had not a large door to it at the east end, as the lower had, but only some small doors to enter at from the sides above, Solomon contrived a pair of winding stairs to be cut through the wall, for a passage to the upper part. The inside of the temple was lined with cedar; and the binding of the timber together with strong iron chairs, added greatly to the strength of the building.

"The king caused it to be laid in two divisions; that is to say, the inner part or holy of holies, of twenty cubits square, which was inaccessible; and the other of forty cubits, which was assigned to the use and service of the priests. In the partition wall, betwixt the inner and outward parts of the temple, he built large cedar doors, which were richly gilt, and exquisitely carved, beside choice subjects of nature and history, embroidered upon a hanging veil before it, of rich silks and fine linen, interwoven with beautiful. flowers, and the colours all in perfection.

"Solomon caused also to be formed two cherubim of massy gold, which he dedicated to God in the holy place, being each of them five cubits high, + and two

solid gold, and only five cubits high; while our

^{*} The Jewish doctors have entertained a very odd conceit relating to the passage in the sacred history, wherein the temple is said to have been built without noise. They tell us, that the dæ-mon Asmodeus drove Solomon once from his throne, and reigned in his place, while that prince was forced to travel over the several kingdoms and provinces of the world; but that, at his return to Jerusalem, he defeated Asmodeus, and having chained him so that he could do no hurt, he compelled him to teach him the art of cutting stones for the temple without making any noise, which was done, as they say, not with any tool or instrument, but by the help of a worm, called Sa-

mir, which cuts and polishes stone with a marvel-ous facility. But the foundation of all this fiction (as Bochart, Hieroz. p. 2. lib. vi. c. 11. has observ-ed) is laid in somebody's mistaking the sense of the word Samir, which signifies a very hard stone, called Smiris, that is of use to cut and polish other stones, and which Solomon's workmen might possibly have had recourse to upon this occasion. But the true reason why no noise was heard in the building of the temple, was, that the stones and all other materials were hewn, and squared, and fitted at a distance, so that when they were brought to the place where the temple was to stand, there was nothing to do but to join them together. And this might be done, not only for the ease and convenience of the carriage, but for the magnificence of the work, and the commendation of the workmen's skill and ingenuity.-Poole's Annotations, and Calmet's Dictionary.

† Josephus says here that the cherubim were of

wings, each of them five cubits in length; which being stretched out, one touched the south side, and the other the north; and with their other two wings they met one another, overspreading the holy ark These cherubim surpassed in the middle. The very floor of the temall description. ple was overlaid with beaten gold. doors which were added to the gate of the temple were proportioned to the height of the wall, and twenty cubits broad, which There was were also covered with gold. a curious curtain put up at this gate, as at the other, but none at the entrance into the porch. In short, this superb edifice might be deemed a composition of all that is valuable in nature.

"It having been reported to king Solomon, that there lived at Tyre a man named Hiram, eminent for his extraordinary skill in workmanship upon gold, silver, and other metals, being superior in his art to the whole fraternity—his mother was of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father, by extraction, an Israelite—he sent for this man from Tyre, and employed him in his business, and whensoever Solomon had any thing to do that was difficult or curious, it was performed by Hiram.

"He cast him two brazen hollow pillars of four fingers thick in the metal, eighteen cubits high, and twelve in circumference; and placed two chapiters of brass on the tops of the two pillars, five cubits each. These were covered with a kind of brass network; and below them were flowers of lilywork of the same contrivance, with two rows of pomegranates hanging down, a hundred in each row. These two pillars he placed at the entrance of the porch; one on the right hand, which he called Jachin, and the other on the left, which he called Boaz.

"He made a vessel also of molten brass, somewhat after the figure of a globe, cut

off in the middle, which for the largeness of it he called his sea. It was made goblet fashion; the diameter ten cubits from side to side, four fingers thick, with a spiral pillar of one cubit over, under the middle of it for a supporter. Around this pillar were placed the figures of twelve bulls, or oxen, facing, by three and three, the four principal quarters of east, west, north, and south. They stood in a position lower behind than before, which was both a support to the weight, and kept it firm and steady. This sea, or vessel, held three thousand baths, reckoning every bath at about ten English pottles.

"Hiram made also ten bases of brass of an oblong square, and all of the same form and dimensions; that is, five cubits in length each of them, four in breadth, and six in height. The several pieces were cast apart, and then put together after this manner. There were four pillars, or under-setters, one to the corner of every base, which were so incorporated with the rest of the work that they served not only to uphold the weight, but to keep the sides close to each other. Upon the square were the figures of a lion, a bull, an eagle, &c.; images were also placed upon the pillars, and upon the plates of the borders. The whole work was mounted upon four wheels, a cubit and a half over, all of cast work, which had naves, spokes, and felloes; and the whole was executed with amazing accuracy and sym-The angles were formed with embossed work of shoulders, and paws of lions, and talons of eagles; with rests or lodges of rail upon them to receive the laver; but so artificially fitted to the fingers of those creatures, as they were represented upon the pannels, together with branches of palm-trees intermixed upon the same piece, that every thing looked as natural life.

"Such was the structure of the ten bases; and to these bases he made ten layers of the same metal, and of an oval

Hebrew copies (1 Kings vii. 23, 28.) say they were of the olive-tree; and the Seventy, of the cypress-tree, and only overlaid with gold; and both agree they were ten cubits high.

form, each containing forty baths; the height four cubits, and the diameter as much. These ten lavers were set upon as many bases, which in their language they called Mechonoth. They were all placed in the temple; five of them on the left-hand, at the north side; and the other five at the south side, on the right, looking toward the east. In the same direction stood likewise the brazen sea. They were all filled with water; the sea for the use of the priests to wash their hands and feet with, upon entering the sanctuary, before they went up to the altar; and the rest of the lavers for cleansing of the entrails, and other parts of burnt-offerings.

'He erected moreover a brazen altar of twenty cubits in length, as many in breadth, and ten in depth, providing all the vessels thereunto belonging of the same stuff; as boilers, water-pots, flesh-hooks, &c. He dedicated also a great number of tables, and one of pure gold for the shew-bread, larger than the rest. But there were many others of several forms and sizes, not much inferior to that for the shew-bread.*

"He made a provision likewise of ten candlesticks, for the service of the temple, and there to be kept with light in them, burning day and night, after the direction of the law. "The table for the shew-bread was placed on the north side, over against the candlestick which stood on the south. Betwixt these was the golden altar.

"These were all in that part of the temple which was forty cubits long, and were before the vail of the holy of holies, wherein the ark of the covenant was to

be kept.

"Neither expense nor labour was spared to complete the strength and magnificence of this stupendous structure; which long remained a monument of the founder's zeal for the honour of God, and his holy worship.

"When the preparatory part was over, the church stuff was deposited in the holy treasury, and set apart for religious uses.

"The temple itself was fenced with an enclosure of three feet in height to keep out the laity from entering into a place where only the priests were to be admitted. Beyond this partition was another square court or building, with large porticos or galleries about it, and four stately gates, that opened east, west north, and south; the doors were all plated and inlaid with gold. This place was common to all people, provided they came thither with that purity of preparation and legal qualification which the law required.

"The outward building was superb beyond expression, and arduous beyond conception; there were hollows filled up, which from their depth might be deemed the work of ages; yet these were levelled in order to be a foundation for this astonishing fabric.

"This part was encompassed again with a kind of double cloisters, and two rows of pillars to support it, every pillar being cut whole out of the rock. The doors were all silver work; the roof fret-work, and the wainscotting all of cedar.

"This curious edifice was completed in the short space of seven years; and it is difficult to determine which most demands our admiration,—the magnitude, sumptu-

^{*} It is not to be doubted but that Solomon made all the utensils and ornaments of the temple proportionable, both in number and richness, to that of the edifice; and yet Josephus seems to have carried his account beyond all credibility, when he tells us that there were 10,000 tables, besides those of the shew-bread; 10,000 candlesticks, besides those in the holy place; 80,000 cups for drink-offerings; 100,000 basons of gold, and double that number of silver: when he tells us that Solomon caused to be made 1000 ornaments for the sole use of the high priest; 10,000 linen robes and girdles for that of the common priests; and 200,000 more for the Levites and musicians: when he tells of 200,000 trumpets made according to Solomon's direction, with 200,000 more, made in the fashion that Moses had appointed, and 400,000 musical instruments of a mixed metal, between gold and silver, called by the ancients electrum; -concerning all which we can only say tnat the text is either silent or contradicts this prodigious account .- Universal History.

ousness, and splendour of the work itself, or the shortness of the time in which it was effected; as the business of ages was transacted within the narrow compass of a few years."

The mighty undertaking being now brought to perfection, Solomon wrote to all the elders of Israel, and the heads of the tribes, to summon the people up to Jerusalem to see the temple, and to assist in transporting thither the ark of the covenant.

The resolution was duly notified, and in the seventh month, which was called Ethanim, with much difficulty they were convened.

In this month was the feast of tabernacles, which among the Israelites was accounted the most sacred and solemn of their festivals. So the priests took up the ark, and Moses's tabernacle, with the holy vessels belonging to the altar, and carried them all into the temple. The king, and the whole congregation, with the Levites, marched before them with their sacrifices and oblations, sprinkling the ground, as they passed, with their blood, and perfuming the air with the fragrancy of incense and sweet odours to such a degree, that people were sensible of it at a distance; and it indicated that God himself had descended from heaven to consecrate the temple that was newly built and dedicated to himself, and therein to take up his abode. For though the whole congregation came singing and dancing all the way to the temple, they went on fresh and cheerfully to their journey's end.

This was the manner of their transporting the ark: On their approach to the holy of holies, where it was to be deposited, the people withdrew, and the priests only that brought it carried it into the oracle, and there placed it under the figures of the two cherubim that were represented with the points of their wings touching one another, which looked like a kind of cover and protection to the ark that was under them.

The ark contained nothing more than the two tables of stone,* on which were engraved the ten commandments, as God delivered them upon mount Sinai.

The candlestick, table, and golden altar, stood in the same order in the sanctuary as they did at first in the tabernacle, when they offered their daily sacrifices.

The brazen altar was placed directly against the door, for the better view of the magnificence of the worship on the other side; and then the rest of the holy utensils and vessels were all laid up together in the temple.

The ark being fixed with the utmost order and solemnity, and the priests withdrawn from the sacred spot, there descended a cloud, which so filled and darkened the place, that they could hardly see. It resembled not a heavy lowering sky, but a mild dew, and seemed to intimate the divine approbation of the pious work in which they were engaged; and also to portend that the Almighty would vouchsafe to dwell there as a place peculiarly devoted to his honour and worship.

^{*} The sacred history tells us, that 'in this ark there was nothing, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb,' 1 Kings viii. 9. and yet the author to the Hebrews affirms, 'that in this ark was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, as well as the tables of the covenant.' Heb. ix. 4. Now, to reconcile this, some imagine, that before the ark had any fixed and settled place, (which is the time the apostle refers to) all these things were included in it, though it was chiefly intended for nothing but the tables of the covenant; but that, when it was placed in the temple, nothing was left in it but these two tables; all the other things were deposited in the treasury of the temple, where the book of the law (as we read, 2 Chron, xxxiv. 14.) was found in the days of king Josias. Others however pretend, that, in the time of the apostle, i. e. towards the end of the Jewish commonwealth, Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were really kept in the ark, though in the days of Solomon they were not. But this answer would be more solid and satisfactory, if we knew for certain, that, in the times of the apostle, the ark of the covenant was really in the sanctuary of the temple which Herod built, whereas Josephus tells us expressly that, when the Romans destroyed the temple, there was nothing found in the holy of holies. Calmet's Commentary.

While the people were contemplating on the mighty event, Solomon stood up, and, with a grace and majesty becoming the dignity of the subject and occasion, addressed himself in a short prayer to Almighty God, in words to this effect:—

"O Lord, thou that inhabitest eternity, and hast raised out of nothing the mighty fabric of this universe, the heavens, the air, the earth, and the sea; thou that fillest the whole, and every thing that is in it, and art thyself unbounded and incomprehensible; look down graciously upon thy servant that has presumed to erect a temple here to the honour of thy great name. Lord, hear our prayers, and receive our sacrifices; thou that art every where, vouchsafe also to be with us; thou that seest and hearest all things, look down from thy throne in heaven, and give ear to our supplications in this place; thou that never failest to assist those that call upon thee night and day, and love and serve thee as they ought to do, have mercy upon us."

Having thus humbly addressed the God of Israel in prayer and supplication, the king, turning himself to the people, reminded them of the wonderful things that had been revealed to his father David in dreams and visions; some of which had been accomplished, and others were yet to come, concerning himself, his name, his succession to the throne, his building of the temple, the establishment of his family, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation.

"Now," says he, "a great part of these predictions being already verified, you are to thank God, not only for the comforts you enjoy, but for the good things also that are further promised, and to look upon the former only as the earnest of greater blessings."

After the speaking of these words the king turned his eye again toward the temple, and thus addressed the Divine Majesty: "O Lord, what are the most glorious works of man, in comparison even with

the smallest of thy benefits and mercies? Or what can we, that have nothing to give, pretend to offer thee that wantest nothing, when the very least of thy bounties are above and beyond all requital? We can only render thee praise, acknowledgment, and thanksgiving; and that indeed is a prerogative that thou hast vouchsafed to mankind above all other creatures; so that this I am not only allowed, but obliged to do, in the name of myself, my family, and the whole people of Israel, for all thy multiplied favours and infinite goodness towards us. As we have no other way of expressing our duty and affections than by means of bare empty words, that are only air, be pleased to accept of our humble gratitude; -first, for thy gracious goodness to my father, in raising him from a shepherd's crook to an imperial sceptre,-next, for making good to myself all thy promises and predictions in my favour.

"Lord, continue thy bounties to us, as to thy chosen people. Preserve, prosper, and perpetuate the government to our family, by a constant train of successions from generation to generation, according to thy promises to my father, living and dying. Do thou, O Lord, grant us all this; and to all mine, the virtues and the grace that may make them acceptable in thy sight.

"I do further most humbly beseech thee, to let thy Holy Spirit descend upon this temple, in the blessing of thy peculiar presence. Heaven and earth I know are too little for thy majesty and glory; and much more the workmanship of men's hands, in a fabric of wood and stone; and yet I cannot but presume to implore thy providence and protection over it. O Almighty Lord, preserve it from the power and rage of enemies; and be pleased to take care of it, as thy own property and possession: and if at any time hereafter thou shalt be moved in thy just displeasure to punish this people for their transgressions, with famine, pestilence, or any other

judgment, according to the degree of their humble supplications to thee in thine own house, with prayers and tears, for mercy and forgiveness, to remove thy judg-This I beseech thee, not for the Israelites alone, but for the relief indifferently of all people whatsoever, that shall offer up their petitions to thee in this holy place. By this means it will appear to the whole world, that this is thy house, and we thy people; and that the Israelites are not so inhuman as to envy strangers the common dispensations of the Author and Fountain of all our happiness."

After this humble and affectionate prayer for the divine blessing on his work, Solomon cast himself upon the ground, and, after a short continuance in that posture of adoration, he rose and offered sacrifices in abundance; having the satisfaction also of an assurance, by a token from God, that his oblations were accepted; for there fell a flash of fire from heaven, that shot through the air directly down to the altar, and consumed the offerings.

This prodigy being seen by the whole multitude, they all looked upon it as a certain sign of God's owning both the worship and the temple, which filled them with such exceeding joy, that they all fell down together, and unanimously joined in praise and adoration.

Solomon continued his praises and thanksgivings, persuading and encouraging the multitude to do the like for so clear an evidence of God's special favour toward them.

The king charged the people to be instant with God in prayer, for the continuance of his goodness and graces to them, that they might live in holiness and righteousness, without any spot or blemish, and walk in the steps, and according to the divine traditions of Moses, to their lives' end; this being the sure and only way to render the Israelites the happiest people of all mortals.

He reminded them also, that their feliwickedness, Lord, be pleased, upon their city was no way to be secured and augmented, but by the means by which it was acquired, as being not only the effect, but the reward of piety and justice. And further added, that it was much easier to get what they wanted, than to keep what they had got; admonishing them to beware, lest they forfeited, by any misdemeanor, what they had gained by their virtue.

> The king, having finished his solemn charge, dismissed the assembly, after he had offered up in sacrifice for himself and his people, twelve thousand calves, and a hundred and twenty thousand lambs.

> This was the first blood that was spilt in the temple; and the Israelites, with their wives and children, were all feasted at it.

> There was celebrated at the same time before the temple, besides this solemnity, the feast of tabernacles, which lasted fourteen days, at the king's expense, with great magnificence and splendour.

> The various ceremonies on this occasion being performed with that solemnity which was requisite, every man was now returning to his habitation; but not without making many acknowledgments of the king's wisdom, care, and bounty in all respects, and prayers for his long life, and the continuance of the people under the blessing of his government.

> They went back, singing, rejoicing, and giving glory to God, and their hearts were so elated with the transaction in which they had been engaged, and the manifest tokens they had received of the divine favour and approbation, that they proceeded on their way with alacrity and cheerfulness, without the least sense of fatigue or danger.

> The ark being now deposited in the temple, and the beauty and magnificence of that glorious structure with all due ceremony and solemnity set forth, the congregation dispersed, and returned home, when God appeared a second time to Solomon in his sleep, and a voice told him,

"That God had accepted his sacrifices, and heard his prayers; that he would preserve his temple, and make it the house of his dwelling; so long as he himself, and his posterity and people, should continue to walk before him, as David his father did, in pureness of heart; promising him, upon that condition, to advance him to the highest degree of earthly bliss; to perpetuate the throne of Israel to his family; so that there should never want a prince of that line, and of the tribe of Judah, to sway the sceptre of Israel. on the other hand, if ever they should depart from, or forget the worship they professed, and run after strange gods, they should be quite rooted out from off the face of the earth, and Israel be no longer a people; but after being torn to pieces, and broken with wars, and other calamities at home, be forced to shift for themselves in the wide world, as vagrants and exiles."

And the voice further told him, " That in case of such an apostasy, his new erected fabric should, with the Divine permission, be sacked and burned by the hands of barbarians, and Jerusalem itself laid in rubbish and ashes by a merciless enemy; insomuch that the people should stand amazed at the very report of so incredible a misery and distress, and be wondering one to another how it should come to pass, that a people who were but yesterday the envy of all mankind, for riches, external glory, and reputation, should now on a sudden be sunk and lost to the last degree of wretchedness and contempt, and reduced to this despicable state too by the same hand that raised them. To which question their own guilty consciences shall make this answer: We have forsaken our God, we have abandoned the religion of our forefathers, and of our country. And all this is justly befallen us for our sins."

This was the substance of Solomon's dream, or vision, as it is transmitted to us by the sacred historian.

When this magnificent structure was raised and consecrated to the divine worship and service, Solomon entered upon the building of a royal palace for himself, which was full thirteen years in perfecting. He was not so solicitous and intent upon the latter, as the former, which in truth was great and artificial to a miracle; and without God's peculiar blessing and assistance, could not have been completed in that compass of years.

Solomon's court indeed was in appearance much inferior to the majesty of his temple, not only for want of time to provide his materials, but because it was designed only for the honour and convenience of a temporal prince, and the other dedicated to the King of kings; so that the work was longer in finishing. However, it was sufficient to answer the end for which it was designed, being a work that redounded much to the glory both of the prince and people. But in this place it may neither be unprofitable nor unentertaining, to recite an account of the model and disposition of this stupendous fabric.

There was erected, upon several rows of pillars, a spacious pile of building, in the nature of a common hall, for the hearing of causes. It was a hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and thirty in depth; nor could it well be less, to receive the vast multitudes that came thronging thither from all parts for justice. It was supported by sixteen square columns, covered with Corinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors curiously wrought, that served both for the security and the ornament of the place.

In the middle of this court, or hall, was another edifice of thirty cubits square, and under-set with strong pillars, in which quarter was a throne of state, where the king himself used to sit personally in judgment.

Adjoining to this royal court of justice, was the queen's house, and other apartments, for diversion and retreat after the fatigue of business, all fitted up with ce-

cubits square.* which were partly plain, and in part o crlaid with the most precious marble, after the fashion of the most

magnificent palaces of temples.

The rooms were hung with three depths of rich hangings, and beautified with images, in sculpture, of trees, plants, branches, &c., and all so marvellously wrought, that they appeared to the eye to be all in motion.

The remainder of the space up to the ceiling, was all set out with delicate particoloured figures, upon white ground; and beside these, there was a great variety of other chambers for retirement or delight; long and large galleries; vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, elegantly adorned, with costly furniture and gildings; besides which, all the services for the king's table were of pure gold.

It would be endless to give a particular account of this mighty building, which comprehended such an infinite diversity of chambers and offices, great and small; some under ground, others above, as

vaults, turrets, and the like.

In a word, the whole house was composed of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver, with precious stones, intermingled upon the walls or ceilings, after the manner of the adorning of the temple.

There was also erected a very large ivory throne,+ with delicate carved work and

dar, and raised upon huge stones, of ten | engravings upon it, after the fashion of a tribunal. There were six steps that ied v . to it;-the figure of a lion at each end of every step, and two lions above; that is, one on either hand of the state.‡

As the king rested upon his throne, there were arms put forth, as in a readiness to take care of him, and to receive him; and the figure of a bullock placed in a proper posture under him for his support. The whole piece was covered with gold.

The two magnificent structures were twenty years in finishing; and Hiram king of Tyre contributed to the mighty work. It was a huge mass of gold, and a greater of silver, besides a great quantity of cedar and fir. Nor was Solomon unmindful of the presents he made him; for he sent him every year great quantities of corn, wine, and oil, a supply that Hiram, being an islander, stood most in need of.

He bestowed upon him, moreover, twenty cities upon the borders of Galilee, not far from Tyre, of which upon

of wood) but only in particular places, that so the mixture of gold and ivory, which gave a lustre to each other, might make the throne look more beautiful. The like to this, the text says, there was not made in any kingdom, I Kings x. 20. and perhaps it was so in those days; but, in after-ages, we read, that the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars, beset with precious stones; and that the Persian kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, (and other trees of gold,) the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones .-Patrick's Commentary.

‡ An account is given by Sir Thomas Roe of a throne of the Mogul, much resembling this of Solomon: " He hath at Agra a most glorious throne within his palace, the ascent to which is by divers steps, covered with plates of silver; on the top of the ascent stand four lions upon pedestals of marble, which lions are all of massy silver, in part gilt. These lions support a canopy of fine gold, under which the Mogul sits when he appears in his greatest state and glory."

It is an express injunction, which God gives the Israelites, that the land, wherein the people had a right by a divine lot, and himself a right, as being the sole proprietor thereof, was not to be sold or alienated for ever, Lev. xxv. 28. How then could Solomon, without violating this law, pretend to give Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee? Now to this some have replied, that

^{*} The size of these stones has been justly deemed matter of surprise, their measure being from seventeen to eighteen feet. All surprise, however, at these will cease, on the mention of what is related by Volney concerning the ruins of Balbec, that there are stones amongst them of fifty-eight feet in length and twelve feet in thickness. What means the ancients had of moving such enormous masses, is wholly unknown.-Frag. to Calmet.

⁺ We never read of ivory till about Solomon's days, who perhaps brought elephants out of India, or at least took care to have a great deal of ivory imported from thence; for, in after-ages, we read of ivory beds, and ivory palaces, &c. At this time, however, it was every whit as precious as gold: and therefore we must not suppose that this throne of Solomon's was entirely overlaid with gold, (for then it might as well have been made | Solomon did not give Hiram a property, and per-

review and consideration, he declined the acceptance, with a respectful excuse to Solomon, that he had no need of them. From this refusal, that part of the country was called *Cabul*, which, in the Phœnician language, signifies, 'it does not please me.'

So great was the king of Tyre's esteem and reliance on the wisdom of the king of Israel, that whenever any perplexed case offered itself to his consideration, he applied himself to that extraordinary prince for his judgment and direction. Solomon never failed to answer him to his satisfaction, according to the true reason and nature of the matter in hand.

petual right to those cities, but only assigned him the possession of them for a time, until the debt, which he had contracted for the several supplies he had from him while he was building the temple, was satisfied. Others think, that upon supposition that these cities were inhabited by Israelites, Solomon did not give Hiram (as indeed he could not) their particular possessions, but only his own royalties over them, (which he might justly do,) and all the profits he received from them, which, according to the taxes then imposed, I Kings xii. 4. were not inconsiderable. But there is no reason for these far-fetched solutions, when the scripture expressly tells us, that these cities were not in the territories of Israel, nor inhabited at that time by the Israelites, 2 Chron. viii. 2. They were indeed some of them conquered by the king of Egypt, who gave them to Solomon as a portion with his daughter, and others by Solomon himself, who, as Selden observes, had "a right to dispose of those lands, which he had conquered in voluntary war, without the consent of the senate:" and this may be one reason why he gave these rather than other cities, because these were certainly in his power to give, when others perhaps were not. A learned author, upon this subject, has given a quite different turn to the sense of the passage: for his opinion is, that Hiram did not return these cities because he thought them not good enough, but because he was unwilling to receive so large a remuneration for the few good offices he had done Solomon, and was minded rather that his favours of this kind should be all gratuitous. He therefore makes the word Cabul a title of respect, and not of contempt; for he derives it from the Hebrew Chebes, which signifies a bond, or chain, in-timating that these two neighbouring kings had mutually bound themselves in a bond of friend-ship, Solomon by giving, and Hiram by returning the cities, now under consideration. This is very pretty: but it is carrying the point of generosity in the king of Tyre a little too high, in my opinion, considering his acceptance of, if not express stipulation for, such a quantity of corn and oil, in lieu of the timber which he sent Solomon, I Kings v. 10, 11.—Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries, und Poole's Annotations.

Menander, the historian, who translated the Tyrian Annals out of the Phoenician tongue into Greek, makes mention of these two princes as follows: "Hiram, the son of Abibale, succeeded his father in the kingdom of Tyre. He lived three and fifty years, and reigned four and thirty. He annexed a piece of forced ground, called the Great Field, to the island, and dedicated a gold pillar to Jupiter in his temple. He cut down materials also in abundance upon mount Lebanon, for the covering of holy places; and pulling down ancient temples, he built new ones to Hercules and Astarte. He erccted a statue for Hercules in the month of Peritius; and then in an expedition against the Eyceans, for not paying the duty of a tribute, as they ought to have done, he overcame them, and returned home again. In his days there was one Abdemonus, a young man that took upon him to give Solomon, the king of Jerusalem, a solution of all dark and mysterious questions that should be put to him."

Dius also writes to this effect.—" Abibale being now dead, Hiram his son succeeded him, who, by filling up void places in the east quarter of the town, enlarged the borders, and brought the temple of Olympian Jupiter, that before stood apart, and at a distance, into the compass of the city,—enriching and adorning it with golden offerings to a very great value; after which he ordered the cutting down of cedars upon mount Lebanon for the use of holy places."

He farther adds, "that Solomon, the king of Jerusalem, often sent problems to Hiram, upon the forfeit of a great sum of money if he failed of expounding them. Those difficult cases were afterwards not only unravelled by Abdemonus a Tyrian, but new propositions started by him, which Solomon himself not being able to solve, was obliged to refund the greatest part of the money." Thus far according to Dius.

The fortifications of Jerusalem being

deemed insufficient for the defence of that spacious and opulent city, king Solomon having finished the temple of the Lord, and his own palace, in the most sumptuous manner, applied himself to the completion of such repairs as were deemed necessary for the security of the place.

He built several cities also of considerable note, as Hazor, Megiddo,—and Gezer, in the land of the Philistines, which Pharaoh the king of Egypt had formerly taken by assault, and rasing it to the ground, put every creature in it to the sword, giving it afterward to his daughter upon the match with Solomon.*

* Gezer lay at a considerable distance from Egypt, which, since the time of Sesostris, had seldom extended its conquests into foreign lands; and therefore, to account for its conduct here, we must observe, that Gezer was so ancient a town in Canaan, that, when Joshua conquered it, it had a king of no small note; that, in the division of the land, it fell to the tribe of Ephraim, was bordering upon the northern part of the country of the Philistines, and not far from the Mediterranean sea; that it was one of the eight and forty cities which were given to the Levites; an inland town, but at no great distance from the sea-port of Joppa; that when the Ephraimites took possession of it, they suffered the Canaanites to cohabit with them, who gave them no small disturbance, and towards the latter end of David's reign, expelled them thence; that, when Solomon came to the throne, he applied himself chiefly to the building of the temple, nor thought it worth while to disturb the peace of his reign for the recovery of a few revolted cities; that when a match was proposed between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, Pharaoh thought he could not do a more acceptable service, or show the benefit of his alliance better, than in taking Gezer, and some adjacent places; that, for this purpose he set out with a large fleet of ships, landed at Joppa, besieged Gezer, because it made an obstinate defence, burnt it to the ground, and slew all the Canaanites that were in it; but that not long after, he began to rebuild it; and when his daughter was espoused to Solomon, gave him this, and some other places he had taken along with it, as part of her portion; for it is a mistaken notion that princes' daughters had no portion in those days. Among the Jews indeed, the custom was for men to give the dower, or to make some present to the parents, for the favour of having their daughter in marriage. But this custom prevailed only among the inferior sort: ladies of the first distinction were, in all nations, wont to bring their husbands fortunes proportionate to their quality: for Saul, we read, declared, that the man who should slay Goliath, should not only have his daughter in marriage, but together with her, plenty of riches, and other valuable This city the king rebuilt, for the strength of its situation, and the use it might be of to the government, as well in war as peace.

He built likewise not far from thence, Beth-horon and Baalath, beside other places of pleasure, agreeable in respect to the temperature of the climate, the delicacy of the fruits, and effects of the water.

He possessed himself after this of the entrance into the desert that lies towards Syria, where he built a very fair city, two days journey from Upper Syria, one from the Euphrates, and six from Babylon.

This city was erected at such a distance from the habitable part of the country, in order to supply travellers, who passed through the deserts, with water, as it abounded with springs and fountains.

This town being built, walled, and strongly fortified, was called Tadmor, which name it bears among the Syrians to this day. But the Greeks call it Palmyra.

settle upon his, the kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, as a dowry to Ptolemy, king of Egypt; and, to name no more, Agamemnon, in times of an older date, though not so great affluence, offered no less than seven good towns with his, without any reserved rent, or other deduction from her husband. So that Pharaoh did no more than conform to the practice of other great princes, in endowing his daughter with the places he had taken from the Philistines, in all probability, for that very purpose.—Stackhouse.

+ The situation of this city was remote from human habitations, in the midst of a dreary wilder ness; and it is probable that Solomon built it to facilitate his commerce with the East, as it afforded a supply of water, a thing of the utmost importance in an Arabian desert. The original name was preserved till the time of Alexander, who extended his conquests to this city, which then exchanged Tadmor for the title of Palmyra. It submitted to the Romans about the year 130, and continued the alliance with them during a period of 150 years. When the Saracens triumphed in the East, they acquired possession of this city, and restored its ancient name of Tadmor. Of the time of its ruin there is no authentic record; but it is thought, with some probability, that its destruction occurred during the period in which it was occupied by the Saracens. Of its present appearance Messrs Wood and Dawkins, who visited it in 1751, thus speak: "It is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more striking than the view. So great a number of Corinthian pillars, mixed with so little wall or emoluments. Antiochus the Great promised to solid building, afforded a most romantic variety of

There was still a stubborn remnant of the Canaanites, betwixt mount Lebanon and the city of Hamath, who for some time disputed their allegiance to the kings of Israel, till Solomon at last made them his tributaries, upon condition of furnishing him yearly with such a certain number of slaves, as was agreed upon, to be employed in tilling the land, and other sorts of drudgery; for the Israelites were not employed in any work that was servile, neither would it have been reasonable, when God had subdued so many nations to his power, for the conquerors to descend to do the business of their captives.

As to the Israelites, their genius lay more in arms, chariots, horses, exploits of war, and military exercises.

The Canaanites in the mean time were held to their labour, and six hundred officers of the king's put over them, to appoint them their tasks and keep them to their work.

Solomon likewise, for the defence of his kingdom, caused a fleet of ships to be built in Ezion-geber,* an Egyptian bay

There was still a stubborn remnant of upon the Red sea. This port was called Berenice, not far from the city of Eloth, which in those days was reckoned to be under the jurisdiction of the Hebrews.

In the building, fitting, and rigging out of this navy, the king was greatly assisted by Hiram, who sent him as many expert pilots and skilful mariners as he had occasion for, to conduct his officers to the land of Ophir, + where, having got together four hundred talents + of gold, they returned with it to the king.

he made himself master of this port; his son, we see. built ships here, and sent them from hence to Ophir for gold. It continued in the possession of the Israelites about an hundred and fifty years, till, in the time of Joram, the Edomites recovered it, but it was again taken from them by Azariah, and by him left to his son. His grandson Ahaz however lost it again to the king of Syria, and the Syrians had it in their hands a long while, till, after many changes under the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, it came at length into the possession of the Romans. It was formerly a small town, with fraitful fields about it, but now there is nothing left but a tower, which serves as a habitation for the governor, who is subject to the governor of Grand Cairo, and no signs of fruitfulness are to be seen in any parts adjoining to it .- Patrick's Commentary and Calmet's Dictionary.

† In what region of the earth we should search for the famous ports of Tharshish and Ophir, is an inquiry which has long exercised the industry of learned men. They were early supposed to be situated in some part of India, and the Jews were held to be one of the nations which traded with that country. But the opinion more generally adopted is, that Solomon's fleets, after passing the straits of Babel-mandel, held their course along the south-east coast of Africa, as far as the kingdom of Sofala, a country celebrated for its rich mines of gold and silver, (from which it has been denominated the golden Sofala by oriental writers,) and abounding in all the other articles which composed the cargoes of the Jewish ships. This opinion, which the accurate researches of M. D'Anville rendered highly probable, seems now to be established with the utmost certainty by Mr Bruce; who, by his knowledge of the monsoons in the Arabian gulf, and his attention to the ancient mode of navigation, both in that sea and along the African coast, has not only accounted for the extraordinary length of time which the fleets of Solomon took in going and returning, but has shown, from circumstances mentioned concerning the voyage, that it was not made to any place in India. This commercial effort, which the Jews made in the reign of Solomon, was merely a transient one; and they quickly returned to their former state of unsocial seclusion from the rest of mankind .- Dr Robertson.

‡ Four hundred talents in weight amounted to forty-five thousand six hundred and ninety-five

prospect." Captain Mangles, who travelled more recently, observes: "On opening upon the ruins of Palmyra, as seen from the valley of the tombs, we were much struck with the picturesque effect of the whole, presenting the most imposing sight of the kind we had ever seen." But on a minuter inspection, the ruins of this once mighty city do not appear so interesting as at a distance. Volney observes: "In the space covered by these ruins, we sometimes find a palace of which nothing remains but the court and walls; sometimes a tem-ple, whose peristile is half thrown down; and now a portico, a gallery, a triumphal arch. If from this striking scene we cast our eyes upon the ground, another almost as varied presents itself. On which side soever we look, the earth is strewed with vast stones half buried, with broken entablatures, mutilated friezes, disfigured reliefs, effaced sculptures, violated tombs, and altars defiled by It is situated under a ridge of barren hills to the west, and its other sides are open to the desert. The city was originally about ten miles in circumference, but such have been the destructions effected by time, that the boundaries are with difficulty traced and determined. In the 'Modern Traveller' there is a very excellent description of the present aspect of this ruined city, by Mr Josiah Conder .- Calmet. * When David conquered Edom, or Idumea,

quently reached the ears of the queen of to hear and see the king himself, wisely Sheba,* a distant kingdom, who being

pounds Troy, and their value in gold was worth two million one hundred and ninety thousand

pounds English money.

. The queen of Sheba was, according to some, a queen of Arabia; but according to others, a queen of Ethiopia. Josephus says, that Sheba was the ancient name of the city of Meroë, and that the queen, of whom we are speaking, came thence; which opinion has much prevailed. The Ethiopians still claim this princess as their sovereign, and say, that her posterity reigned there for a long time. The visit of this queen to Solomon is one of the most remarkable events of his reign; and as it appears to have had important consequences in her own country, we insert Mr Bruce's account, as related in the annals of Abyssinia. It confirms, most decidedly, the scripture history: "We are not to wonder, if the prodigious hurry and flow of business, and the immensely valuable transactions they had with each other, had greatly familiarized the Tyrians and Jews, with their correspondents the Cushites and shepherds, on the coast of Africa. This had gone so far, as very naturally to have created a desire in the queen of Azab, the sovereign of that country, to go herself and see the application of such immense treasures that had been exported from her country for a series of years, and the prince who so magnificently employed them. There can be no doubt of this expedition, as Pagan, Arab, Moor, Abyssinian, and all the countries round, vouch it pretty much in the terms of scripture. Her name, the Arabs say, was Belkis; the Abyssinians, Macqueda. Our Saviour calls her Queen of the South, without mentioning any other name, but gives his sanction to the truth of the voyage. 'The queen of the south (or Saba, or Azab) shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here,' Matt. xii. 42. Luke xi. 31. other particulars, however, are mentioned about her in scripture; and it is not probable our Saviour would say she came from the utterniost parts of the earth, if she had been an Arab, and had near 50 degrees of the continent behind her. gold, the myrrh, cassia, and frankincense, were all the produce of her own country. Whether she were a Jewess or a pagan is uncertain; Sabaism was the religion of all the East. It was the constant attendant and stumbling-block of the Jews; but, considering the multitude of that people then trading from Jerusalem, and the long time it continued, it is not improbable she was a Jewess. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions,' I Kings x. 1. and 2 Chron. ix. 1. Our Saviour, moreover, speaks of her with praise, pointing her out as an example to the Jews. And, in her thanksgiving

The king of Israel's extraordinary vir- a princess of extraordinary understanding, tue and wisdom having spread his fame and highly accomplished, the renown of throughout the known world, had conse- his character had excited her impatience

> berore Solomon, she alludes to God's blessing on the seed of Israel for ever, which is by no means the language of a pagan, but of a person skilled in the ancient history of the Jews. She likewise appears, to have been a person of learning, and that sort of learning which was then almost peculiar to Palestine, not to Ethiopia. For we see that one of the reasons of her coming was to examine whether Solomon was really the learned man he was said to be. She came to try him in allegories, or parables, in which Nathan had instructed Solomon. The annals of Abyssinia, being very full upon this point, have taken a middle opinion, and by no means an improbable one. They say she was a pagan when she left Azab, but being full of admiration at the sight of Solomon's works, she was converted to Judaism in Jerusalem, and bore him a son, whom she called Menilek, and who was their first king. However strongly they assert this, however dangerous it would be to doubt it in Abyssinia, I will not here aver it for truth, nor much less still will I positively contradict it, as scripture has said nothing about The Abyssinians, both Jews and Christians, believe the xlvth Psalm to be a prophecy of this queen's voyage to Jerusalem; that she was attended by a daughter of Hiram's from Tyre to Jerusalem, and that the last part contains a declaration of her having a son by Solomon, who was to be king over a nation of Gentiles.

> "To Saba or Azab, then, she returned with her son Menilek; whom, after keeping him some years, she sent back to his father to be instructed. Solomon did not neglect his charge; and he was crowned king of Ethiopia in the temple of Jerusalem, and at his inauguration took the name of David. After this lie returned to Azab, and brought with him a colony of Jews, among whom were many doctors of the law of Moses, particularly one of each tribe, to make judges of in his kingdom; from whom the present Umbares, or supreme judges (three of whom always attended the king), are said and believed to be descended. With these came also Azarias, the son of Zadok the priest, and brought with him a Hebrew transcript of the law, which was delivered into his custody, as he bore the title of Nebret, or highpriest; and this charge, though the book itself was burnt with the church of Axum, in the Moorish war of Adel, is still continued, as it is said, in the lineage of Azarias, who are Nebrets, or keepers of the church of Axum, at this day. All Abyssinia was thereupon converted, and the government of church and state modelled according to what was

then in use at Jerusalem.

" By the last act of the queen of Saba's reign, she settled the mode of succession in her country for the future. First, she enacted, that the crown should be hereditary in the family of Solomon for ever. Secondly, that, after her, no woman should be capable of wearing that crown, or being queen; but that it should descend to the heir male, howconcluding, that experimental proof sur- and conduct, but nothing moved her adinconclusive or unauthenticated. Having debated the point for some time with herself, she came to a resolution, notwithstanding all the hazards and difficulties of a long and tedious journey, to make him an honourable visit, for the satisfaction of her curiosity, as well as her inclination and judgment; and to enjoy the benefit of instruction from that wisdom, of which she had heard such an extraordinary account.

With this determination she set forward toward Jerusalem, with a train and equipage suitable to her royal dignity, taking with her a number of camels, laden with gold, a great variety of rich perfumes, and precious stones.

Upon her arrival, the king received her with all possible honour, courtesy, and respect; and with so much ease and clearness solved all the difficulties she proposed, that with astonishment she beheld a display of his surprising power, far superior to that which had been generally rumoured concerning it.

She greatly admired the magnificence of his palace, the order and disposition of the building, and at the king's incomparable skill, through the whole contrivance

ever distant, in exclusion of all heirs female, however near; and that these two articles should be considered as the fundamental laws of the kingdom, never to be altered or abolished. And lastly, that the heirs male of the royal house should always be sent prisoners to a high mountain, where they were to continue till their death; or till the succession should open to them. The queen of Saba, having made these laws irrevocable by all her posterity, died, after a long reign of forty years, in 986 before Christ, placing her son Menilek upon the throne, whose posterity, the annals of Abyssinia would teach us to believe, have ever since reigned. So far, indeed, we must bear witness to them that this is no new doctrine, but has been steadfastly and uniformly maintained from their earliest account of time; first, when Jews, then in later days, after they had embraced Christianity. We may further add, that the testimony of all the neighbouring nations is with them on this subject, whether friends or enemies. They only differ in the name of the queen, or in giving her two names."-Bruce, Taylor's Calmet, and Dr A. Clarke.

passed the most confirmed report, which, miration more than the masterly execuon proper examination, might be found tion of that fabric, called the grove of Lebanon; the elegant and regular course of his entertainments; the discipline and economy of his household; and the peculiar grace and propriety with which he conducted all his concerns.

> She was likewise infinitely pleased with the sight of the daily sacrifices, and the application, care, and veneration, with which the priests and Levites performed their part in the worship.

The regularity and order of their stated worship employed her thoughts day and night, and so exceedingly affected her mind, that she broke out into this rapturous address: "Great prince, report is so doubtful and uncertain, that without a demonstrative and experimental confirmation of the truth of what we hear, we are forced to suspend our assent, especially where the fame of things relates either to extreme good or evil: but with respect to your incomparable faculties; that is, to the advantages of the mind in a superlative degree of knowledge and understanding, and the glory of your outward state,*

^{*} The sovereigns of the East, it is well known, are very fond of displaying their gorgeous splendour. The present sovereign of Persia, and (after his example) his sons, generally appoint for the reception of ambassadors such an hour as, according to the season, or the intended room of audience, will best enable them to display the brillian-cy of their jewels in full sunshine. The title of bright or resplendent was added to the name of one sovereign, who lived upwards of eight centuries ago, because his regal ornaments, glittering in the solar rays on a solemn festival, so dazzled the eyes of all beholders that they could scarcely hear the effulgence; and some knew not which was the monarch, or which the great luminary of the day. Thus, Theophylact Simocatta (a Greek historian who flourished in the seventh century of the Christian era) relates that the Persian king, Hormisdas, sitting on his throne, astonished all spectators by the blazing glories of his jewels. Thus also king Agrippa was almost regarded as a god, so powerfully did his ornamented dress reflect the morning sun-beams; and it was probably the splendour of Solomon 'in all his glory,' when seated on the throne, in addition to the magnifi-cence of his establishment, which so struck the queen of Sheba on beholding them, that 'there was no more spirit in her.'-Horne.

that it falls short even of a common justice; for though common fame reported as much to your honour as words could express, I have yet the happiness at this present time to see much more than I heard. Blessed are the Hebrews; blessed are the friends and people of Solomon, that stand ever before him, and hear his wisdom; and blessed be God for his goodness to this land and nation, in placing them under the government of so excellent a prince."

Nor did this great princess testify her admiration of the extraordinary endowments of Solomon by words alone, but as a farther instance of the high respect she had for the king, she made him a present of twenty talents of gold, and aromatic spices, rich perfumes, and precious stones, to a prodigious value.*

Nor was the king of Israel wanting in grateful acknowledgment of the favour thus conferred upon him, for he denied the queen nothing, and was much readier to give than she was to ask, even to the preventing of her desires. After this reciprocal interchange of presents given and taken, the queen returned to her own country.

Soon after the departure of the queen of Sheba, Solomon's fleet returned from Ophir, (otherwise called the land of gold,) with stones for jewels, and almug wood † in abundance; the latter was made use of partly for pillars and supporters to the king's temple and palace, and partly for musical instruments, as harps, timbrels, psalteries, and the like, for the Levites to glorify God upon in company with their voices.

This plate-fleet brought the king six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, over and above the merchants' adventure, and what the governors and kings of Arabia sent him for presents. Of this gold he caused to be cast two hundred targets, weighing sixty hundred shekels of gold each; and these were all hung up in the great hall of the grove of Lebanon. His drinking cups were all of beaten gold, too, garnished with precious stones, and most curiously wrought by eminent artists; in short, the rest of his utensils were of the same metal.‡

The renown of Solomon's wisdom, power, and magnificence having now extended to the remotest climates, several potent princes most ardently desired to see him, and embraced every opportunity of testifying by their submission and munificence the veneration in which they held his dignified character. They sent him gold and silver plate, purple robes, spices, and perfumes of all sorts, horses, chariots, and mules for burden, such as for strength and beauty they thought might be most acceptable to the king; so that he had now an addition of four hundred chariots to what he had before; that is, a thousand chariots, and twelve thousand horses, that for beauty and speed were beyond all others; and to grace the spectacle, they had the flower of the youth to ride and

that name; for it was, says he, rather like that of the fig tree, but more white and shining.—Parkhurst.

^{*} They speak also of a root of balsam that she brought with her, which (according to a tradition we have) was the first plant of the kind that ever came into Judea, where it hath propagated so wonderfully ever since.

[†] It is not well ascertained what description of tree is meant by this name. The Latin translators call it thyine wood. Respecting which Theophrastus says, that the thyon or thya tree grows near the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Africa, that it resembles the cypress tree in its boughs, leaves, stalks, and fruit; and that its wood never rots. It was in high esteem among the heathen, who frequently made of this wood the doors of their temples, and the images of their gods. It should be observed, however, that Josephus calls the almug trees of Solomon 'pitch or torch trees:' but cautions us against supposing that the wood of them was like what was known in his time by

[‡] There was no trading with money in this case; for the king had his ships in the sea of Tarsus that merchandised with foreign nations; and in exchange for commodities of his own, brought him back gold and silver, great quantities of ivory, apes, &c. Going and coming, they reckoned upon this expedition as a three years' voyage,

persons, in purple vests; their hair flowing, which added a lustre to their motion,

and a dignity to their general appearance.

This was the body-guard, who, with their arms and quivers, attended the king's chariot (himself mounted in it, clothed in white) to a pleasant retirement not far from the city, in which, for the curious gardens, walks, and fountains, and the fruitfulness of the place, he took great

delight.

Such was the regularity and preciseness of this extraordinary prince, in the minutest cases that fell under his inspection, that he provided for the very paving of the highways that led to his palace at Jerusalem, partly for the convenience of passengers, and partly for his own magni-

He kept not many chariots about his person, but quartered them here and there by certain numbers in the adjacent towns; and these places were called his chariot-

Silver was as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones; and cedars, which had never been seen in Judea before, were now as common as mulberry trees.*

He gave commission also to his Egyptian merchants to buy him a provision of chariots with two horses, at the price of six hundred silver drachmas a-piece; and these were to be sent away to the kings of Syria, and beyond the river Euphrates.

The impartiality of the sacred historian is in no instance more evident than in his recital of the transactions that occurred during the reign of this memorable prince;

manage them. They were all comely who is represented as the most pious, glorious, and wise monarch, that ever swaved the sceptre of Israel in the former part of his government; and as justly censured for departing, in the latter clause of it, from the precepts of his forefather, and sullying the glories he had before acquired.

> His raging lust after women transported him beyond all bounds; nor could the women of his own country serve his turn, for he took indifferently women of all nations, -Sidonians, Tyrians, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. contrary to the institutions of Moses, which forbid the Hebrews any intercourse of marriage with strangers, wisely foreseeing, that strange women would inveigle them over to worship strange gods too.

> This was the true reason of the precaution against such marriages; for the violation of one law is but a step toward the breaking of another; and the taking of a prohibited wife naturally led to the embracing of a prohibited religion.

> But Solomon's sensual appetite was deaf to all counsels of sobriety and reason. He had no less than seven hundred wives that were princesses, (the daughter of the king of Egypt for one,) and three hundred concubines; + and the passion he had for the charms of their conversation

^{*} By the mulberry, or rather sycomore, is here meant a tree called the Egyptian fig; its name denotes it to partake of the nature of the fig-tree, and the mulberry tree. It resembles the mulberry tree in its leaves, and the fig tree in its fruit. Its fruit resembles the fig in shape and size, and its taste is pretty much that of the wild fig. These sycomores were very common in Egypt, also in Judea; we read, Luke xix. 4. that Zaccheus climbed up into a sycomore tree, to see Jesus as he passed by. Sycomore trees appear to have furnished the more ordinary timber, ar cedars did the most precious.- Calmel.

⁺ Without knowing the custom of the princes of the East, their pomp and sumptuousness of living, one might be tempted to wonder what possible use Solomon might make of this milliad of wives and concubines; but as he was between forty and fifty years old before he ran into this excess, we cannot but think that he kept this multitude of women more for state than any other service. Darius Codomannus was wont to carry along with him in his camp no less than three hundred and fifty concubines in time of war; nor was his queen at all offended at it, because these women used to reverence and adore her as if she had been a goddess. F. Le Compte, in his history of China, tells us, that the emperor there has a vast number of wives, chosen out of the prime beauties of the country, many of which he never so much as saw in his whole life: and therefore it is not improbable that Solomon, as he found his riches increase, might enlarge his expenses, and endeavour to surpass all the princes of his time in this, as well as all other kinds of pomp and magnificence .- Stackhouse.

carried him into compliances with them in the impiety of their practices and opinions, as the most effectual earnest he could give them of his tenderness and affection.

As he grew more advanced in years he felt the decay of age in his mind as well as in his body; and still as he became more and more careless and remiss in the exercise of the true worship, he was the more easily prevailed upon to join with these strange women in a false one.* Nor was this the first breach of the law that he was guilty of; for he had transgressed in making images of oxen to support his brazen sea, and in the lions afterward that were set as a guard upon the throne,

carried him into compliances with them in which were all directly against a positive the impiety of their practices and opin-institution.

He had at the same time in his own family the most glorious precedent for honour and virtue, in the example of his father, whose piety and practice were so expressly recommended to his imitation, that God inculcated his charge over and over to him in his sleep; and, upon the pain of his utmost displeasure, enjoined him to tread in his father's steps. This he neglected to do, and came in the conclusion to an ignominious end.

The eye of Omniscience having beheld his vicious practices, it pleased God at length to let him know that his displeasure was kindled against him, by sending a prophet to assure him, that his wickedness was not so secret, and he should not pass long unpunished; but, in regard to a promise from Heaven to his father that he should have no other successor. the prophet told him that his government should not be taken from him while he was living, but that after his death his son should suffer for the iniquities of his father: not that there should be a universal defection, but that ten tribes only should revolt, and the other two continue in their allegiance to the son of Solomon for his grandfather's sake, and for the sake of the temple at Jerusalem, which God had made choice of for the place of his habitation.

This severe chastisement, which fore-

^{*} A man of Solomon's great wisdom, one would think, should have converted those women that were about him to the true religion, rather than have suffered himself to be perverted by them to a false one. The scripture tells us that he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, and Chemosh, the abomination of Moab;' but surely he could never be so far infatuated as to prefer these idols before the God of Israel. These women, no doubt, as they had got an ascendant over him, might abate his zeal against idolatry, and prevail with him for a public toleration of their religion: they might obtain money of him for the making of their idols, the support of their priests, and expense of their sacrifices; nay, and might sometimes persuade him to go with them to their worship, or to partake of their lewd and riotous feasts; but that they should ever be able to alter his notions concerning the true God, or prevail with him to believe that the images they worshipped were informed with any kind of divinity, is a thing incredible. But whatever notions he may have formed of these idols, we may presume, that towards the conclusion of his life he grew sensible of his transgressions, though the sacred writer takes no notice of it, on purpose to leave a blot upon his memory, and a frightful example of human weakness to all posterity; that the temples which he had built to heathen idols, he pulled down and demolished, though they were afterwards raised again upon the same places by other impious princes; and that after his fall, he wrote his book of Ecclesiastes, as a monument of his repentance, and acknowledgment of his own apostasy, and a warning and admonition to all others, that however they may think of 'doing whatever their eyes desired, of keeping nothing from them, and of withholding their hearts from no joy;' yet in the event they would find (what his experience had taught him so late) that all 'was vanity and vexation of spirit;' that there was no profit in any kind of wickedness under the sun, but that 'to fear God and keep his commandments was the whole duty of man.'-Stackhouse.

[†] Josephus, from whom the above is taken, is certainly too severe upon Solomon, who, in making the cherubim and these twelve brazen oxen, seems to have done no more than imitate the patterns left him by David; which were all given David by divine inspiration. And although God gave no direction for the lions that adorned his throne, yet does not Solomon seem therein to have broken any law of Moses; for although the Pharisees and latter Rabbins have extended the second commandment, to forbid the very making of any image, though without any intention to trave it worshipped, yet do not I suppose that Solomon so understood it, nor that it ought to be so understood. The making any other altar for worship but that at the tubernacle, was equally forbidden by Moses; yet did not the two tribes and a half offend when they made an altar for a memorial only.—Whiston.

told his sudden ejection from the most cess by a surprise, he took new measures, exaited glory and dignity, to the lowest state and condition, wounded him to the very soul; nor could he, on reflection, deny the justice of the sentence.

Some short time after this denouncing message by the prophet, God stirred up a bitter enemy against Solomon, whose name was Hadad, an Edomite by birth, and a branch of the royal family. The ground of his animosity was as follows.

When the Hebrews over-ran the country of Edom under the command of Joab, who at that time was David's general, he, having subdued the people, put to the sword all the males he could find in the province that were able to bear arms, and this execution continued for six months.

This Hadad, who in those days was but a child, made his escape to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who not only received him with great humanity, but very generously gave him houses, lands, and revenues for his entertainment, and conceived such an affection further for him, upon his growing up, that he married him to his own wife's sister, whose name was Tahpenes, who bore him a son that was trained up with the children of Pharaoh.

In process of time word was brought to Egypt that David and Joab were both dead; and Hadad, upon these tidings, desired Pharaoh's leave to return to his own country. The king, not well pleased with his request, asked him what he wanted, or what he meant by that earnestness to leave the best friend be had in the world? And though he pressed him most earnestly, he could not as yet prevail.

Solomon being now in a declining condition, and the measure of his iniquity being well nigh full, God put it into Pharaoh's heart, whom he had hitherto restrained, to let Hadad return; so that he came forthwith into Edom, with a design to stir up the people to a rebellion against Solomon. But, finding the garrisons so strong, and the country in such a posture that there was no possibility of suc-

and went from thence into Syria, where he joined interest with one Rezon, a fugitive from his master Hadadezer, the king of Zobah, and a famous captain of a body of banditti that ravaged the country at pleasure.

Hadad entered into a league with this man; and, with his assistance, subdued that part of Syria, where he got himself to be declared king, and made so many inroads upon the land of the Israelites, that murder and plunder generally prevailed even during the reign of the once potent king Solomon.

Nor were these affronts and indignities from a stranger all that the king suffered; for a more dangerous conspiracy was formed against him at the same time, in his own kingdom, by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a man of a turbulent and ambi-

* When David made war against Hadadezer, Recon, one of his generals, escaped from the field of battle with the troops under his command; and, having lived for a little while by plunder and robbery, at length seized on Damascus and reigned there. But his reign was not long; for David took Damascus as well as the other parts of Syria, and left it in subjection to his son Solomon, till-God was pleased to suffer this Rezon to recover Damascus, and there re-establish himself, to the great disturbance of the latter part of Solomon's reign .- Calmet's Commentary.

+ As Solomon was engaged in several great buildings, he took care to set proper persons over the works, among whom Jeroboam was one, and the workmen under his command seem to be chiefly of the tribe of Ephraim. How he acquitted himself in this capacity we are not told; but the pretence of his being angry with Solomon, and fomenting jealousies among the people, was the building of Millo. Millo was a deep valley between the old Jerusalem and the city of David, part of which David filled up, and thereon made both a fortress and a place for the people to assemble. Another part of it Solomon filled up to build a palace for his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. The prodigious expense which this work cost gave Jeroboam an opportunity to infuse a spirit of sedition into his brethren of the tribe of Ephraim, to complain heavily of hard labour they were forced to submit to, and the taxes they were obliged to pay; and to represent the whole thing as a work of vanity, merely to gratify a proud foreign woman and a silly doting king; and, by these insinuations, he wrought in the people a disaffection to Solomon and his government. -Patrick's Commentary and Calmet's Dictionary.

tious spirit, and one who had an expec- let Solomon's miserable case be a warning been made to him a long time before.

he grew up towards man's estate, for a enjoyment of David's reward." youth of promising parts, and made him Jerusalem. He acquitted himself so well in that commission, that he gave him the military command of the tribe of Joseph, as a consideration for his industry and service.

As he was one day travelling out of Jerusalem, about his business, the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, met him upon the way; and after a formal salute, took him aside and there laid hold of the garment he had on, and rent it into twelve pieces,* bidding him take ten of them to himself, and delivering to him the will of God in these words: "God is resolved to tear the government from Solomon; and for his promise' sake, to give the two contiguous tribes to the son of Solomon, and the other ten to you, as a just punishment for giving up himself to strange women, and to strange gods; wherefore, since you see the ground of his rejection,

tation of rising, from a prophecy that had to you not to do the same things yourself that ruined him. Be just to all men; Jeroboam being left by his father very observe and protect the laws; imitate young, and under the tuition of his David's virtues of piety and religion, and mother, Solomon took notice of him as you may promise yourself the comfort and

Jeroboam was not a little elevated with overseer of his works, being at that time these words of the prophet; and being repairing and rebuilding the walls of naturally of a very haughty and aspiring spirit, every thing that gratified his ambition made him turbulent and unquiet. The prophetical prediction rested upon his mind; and the first thing he did, after he came to the army, was to tamper with the people against their sovereign, and to set up for himself.

Solomon was no stranger to the malice of his designs; and there was a train laid to surprise him, and despatch him: but the plot was discovered, and Jeroboam escaped to Shishak,+ the king of Egypt, where he waited the death of Solomon for a fair opportunity to revive his pretensions.

^{*} The people of the East, especially those who took upon them the character of prophets, were fond of discovering their minds in signs, and emblematical actions; because they looked upon such representations as more lively and affecting than any that proceeded from the mouth only could be. Ahijah might have addressed himself to a man of Jeroboam's haughty spirit to small purpose, had he not, by some previous action, drawn his observation, and made him attentive to the message he was going to deliver. Now, if any such symbolical act was necessary at this time, the tearing his garment was more proper than any, because, in the case of Saul, Samuel had applied it to denote the alienation of his kingdom; 'the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou: and if rending the garment was no insignificant symbol upon this occasion, the newer the garment was, the more it would declare, that what the prophet did was by a divine command, and upon mature deliberation. -Stackhouse.

All the kings of Egypt, from the time of Abraham, are in the sacred history called by the name of Pharaoh, unless Rameses, that is mentioned in Gen. xlvii. 11., be the name of a king, not a country; so that this is the first we meet with, called by his proper name from the rest of the Pharaous. Who this Egyptian prince was, the learned are not agreed. The opinion is pretty general, that it was the famous Sesostris mentioned in Herodotus, but his life could hardly be extended to this period. Usher sets him a vast way backward, even to the time of the peregrination, and some chronologers carry it farther: but be that as it will, it is very pobable that the prince had taken some offence at Solomon, otherwise he would hardly have harbured such seditious refugees as Jeroboam was. Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.—It is far from being improbable that Shishak is the Sesonch's of profane historians, and the head of the Bubastile or twenty-second dynasty of the Egyptian kings. His name has been discovered on the recently explained Egyptian monuments; and he is supposed to have been an Ethiopiau, who, supported by the military caste, dethroned the Pharaoh who was Solomon's fatherin-law. On one of the colonnades which decorate the first court of the great temple or palace of Karnac, there are two royal legends or inscriptions, on one of which M. Champollion read, in phonetic (or vocal hieroglyphic) characters, the words,—
Amon-mai-Sheshonk; 'the well-beloved of Amon (or the sun) Sheshonk.' In the same temple he

CHAPTER IV.

Death of Solomon.—Revolt of the ten tribes from their allegiance to Rehoboam, his son and successor.—They declare for Jeroboam, who seduces them to idolatry.—Awful display of the divine vengeance against wilful disobedience, in God's dispensations toward wicked hings, and a perverse people.—Death of Rehoboam.—Prediction of the ruin of Jeroboam, and his whole family.—Exact fulfilment of that prophecy.

Soon after this special revelation of the divine mind and will to Jeroboam, Solomon the renowned king of Israel paid the debt of nature, having reigned over that mighty people forty years.* He was undoubtedly the wisest and richest prince that ever existed, and might have reigned the happiest, if his inordinate attachment to women had not hurried him into a commission of such enormities in the

also beheld Sesonchis dragging at the feet of the Theban trinity (Amon, Mouth, and Kons.) the chiefs of more than thirty conquered nations, among whom he found written in letters at full length ioudahmaleh, 'the king of Judah, or of the Jews.'

* Josephus indeed tells us, that Solomon lived to a great age, that he reigned eighty years, and died at ninety-four; but this is a manifest error in that historian, and it is a poor and forced way of reconcilement, to say, that the scriptures give us only an account of Solomon while he continu-ed in a state of piety, but that Josephus's compu-tation takes in the whole of his life. The authority of Josephus must never be put in balance with that of the holy scriptures, from whence may be learned, that Solomon lived to the age of fiftyeight, or thereabout, because we may very well presume, that his immoderate pursuit of sensual pleasures both shortened his life, and left an eternal stain upon his memory: otherwise the character, which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives of this prince, is very beautiful: 'Solomon reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured; for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever. How wise wast thou in thy youth, and as a flood filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables. Thy name went far unto the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs, and proverbs, and parables, and interpretations. By the name of the Lord, who is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead: but thou didst bow thy loins unto women, &c. Ecclus xlvii. 14. sight of God, as entailed misery on himself, and were the source of numberless misfortunes to the Israelites, as will appear in the sequel of this history.

Solomon being deceased, and Rehoboam + his son succeeding in course to the throne, some of the grandees sent immediately into Egypt, to inform Jeroboam of the event, and to recall him.

Upon this notice he repaired to Shechem,[‡] and Rehoboam proposed to call an assembly, and enter upon the government by the common declaration and consent of the people.

Upon this occasion divers of the people and leading men, together with Jeroboam,

+ Notwithstanding the vast multitude of wives that Solomon had, the scripture makes mention of no more than three children, this son, and two daughters, and (what is strange) in the beginning of his story it takes no notice (as usually it does) of his mother's nation, or family, though in the conclusion it twice reminds us, that she was an Ammonitess by birth, and that her name was Naamah. Rehoboam was born in the first year of his father's reign, and was therefore much about forty-one when he entered upon the government; but he was an unskilful and imprudent man, and therefore made a very false step at his first acces-sion to the throne. The author of Ecclesiasticus gives us no advantageous character of him, when he terms him ' A man void of understanding, who turned the people away with his counsel.' Nay, his own son makes but a faint apology for him, when he tells the people, that he was young (young in understanding) and tender-hearted, and could not withstand his enemies, 2 Chron. xiii. 7. and therefore some have imagined, that his father Solomon had him in his thoughts, when he said, in his Preacher, 'I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I was to leave it to a man that should come after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured: this also is vanity,' chap. ii. 18, 19.—Patrick's and Calmet's Commen-

† This city stood not only in the centre of the kingdom of Israel, but in the middle of the tribe of Ephraim, wherein there was the greatest number of malcontents. It was therefore very probably by the management of Jeroboam, or some of his friends, who durst not perhaps venture themselves at Jerusalem, that this city was made choice of for the place of a general convention, because they might more securely propose their grievances, (which they were resolved to do) and use a greater freedom of speech, than they could at Jerusalem, where the family of David was more powerful, more numerous, and better supported.—Calmet and Poole.

way of advice and respect, representing to him, that his father had laid heavy burdens upon his subjects, and that they were in hopes they should find him easier; as it was to his interest and security to make himself beloved rather than feared. They humbly recommended this to his consideration; and Rehoboam took three days' time to consider of it.

The delay of his answer gave them some suspicion what would be the result, especially in a case which they considered so necessary to be resolved immediately, and which was so well becoming the years and circumstances of a young prince. However, as he declined giving them a positive answer, they still entertained some hopes of his compliance.

In consequence of this general application Rehoboam advised with his father's friends and counsellors what answer to return them; upon which they gave him the advice which became friends, and advised him by all means to treat them with courtesy and condescension, assuring him that he would gain much more upon their affections by a popular freedom, than by standing to the formalities of majesty and state; there being no such tie upon the hearts of the people, as affability and humility in the prince.

Nothing could have been said more to the purpose in general, or more especially to his purpose in particular, having a kingdom in his view. But his understanding was perverted by a judicial infatuation, to such a degree, that he rejected their counsel, formed a cabal of his own humour and years,* told them what had passed,

went to Rehoboam, and addressed him by and demanded their opinion upon the whole affair.

> They took the point into debate; and whether for want of experience and foresight, or that God had blinded them, they came all to this agreement upon the ques-

Rehoboam was to tell them, "That since they complained of his predecessor, they should find his little finger heavier than his father's loins. If they thought themselves ill-used formerly, they must expect greater severity now; and that if his father had chastised them with whips, he himself was resolved to chastise them with scorpions."+

The king was so delighted with this proud, insulting answer, that upon the third day, when the people were gathered together in the greatest anxiety imaginable, betwixt hope and fear of the doom they were to receive, the king appeared, and rejecting the opinion of his father's counsellors, gave the people for answer, the very words that the young men had put in his mouth,—the providence of God having so ordered it, that the prophecy of the prophet Ahijah might be fulfilled.

These words were no less terrible in the hearing than the dreadful things they threatened would have been in the execution; insomuch that they all cried out in

fellow-pupils, it was, that he afterwards did so many surprising actions. The same custom was in use among the Persians, as we may learn from the life of Cyrus: and, of Alexander the Great we are told, that his father Philip had him trained up, in his youth, among those young noblemen, who became his great captains in the conquest of all Asia. So that Solomon's method and design in the education of his son, was wise and well concerted, though it failed of success.— Calmet's Commentary.

^{*} It was a common custom among the kings of the East, to have their sons educated among other young lords, that were of the same age, which, as it created a generous spirit of emulation, and both endeared the prince to the nobles, and the nobles to the prince, could not but tend greatly to the benefit of the public. Sesostris, the most famous prince that ever Egypt produced, is said to have been educated this way: and, by the gallant youths, that were his contemporaries and inflicted.—Dr A. Clarke.

Should you rebel, or become disaffected, my father's whip shall be a scorpion in my hand. His was chastisement, mine shall be punishment. St Isidore, and after him Calmet and others, assert that the scorpion was a sort of severe whip, the lashes of which were armed with iron points, that sunk into and tore the flesh. We know that the scorpion was a military engine among the Romans for shooting arrows, which being poisoned were likened to the scorpion's sting, and the wound it

a rage, as with one voice: "What have | tinctly as the various subjects will admit we to do with the house of David? Let him take to himself the temple that his father built;" and the uproar looked like a prelude to a general revolt. Nay, the sedition was so violent, that Adoram, one of the king's officers in the treasury, being sent out to pacify them, by laying the blame upon the intemperate zeal of some hot-headed young men, the people stoned him to death, without so much as hearing him.*

Rehoboam looked upon this violence to be levelled at him rather than his officer, (nor was his conjecture without ground,) so that he presently mounted his chariot, and posted away to Jerusalem, to avoid the fury of the mutineers.

The tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as one man, adhered to him, and proclaimed him for their king; but the rest of the people went over to Jeroboam; and from that day forward revolted from their allegiance to the house of David.

Such was Rehoboam's indignation at the thought of this revolt, that he summoned a full convention of the two tribes that stood firm to their allegiance, and drew out one hundred and eighty thousand soldiers, proposing to himself, with this body of men, to reduce the other ten tribes to their duty by force.

While he was preparing for this enterprise, he was admonished by Shemaiah, a prophet from God, not to engage himself in a civil war, especially where the desertion was in some measure the work of a divine direction.

Having premised these things relative to the defection of the tribes, we shall proceed to relate the consequences as dis-

Jeroboam built himself a palace at Shechem, which he made his place of residence, and afterwards, for variety's sake, he erected another at Penuel.

As the feast of tabernacles approached, he thus deliberated with himself on the danger he should incur, by permitting the people to go up to Jerusalem to worship: "If I now suffer the people to go up to Jerusalem, and leave them at liberty to celebrate that festival, they will be so delighted with the shows and ceremonies of the place, and of the religion, that they will be liable to change their minds, and be returning to their old king again, as well as to their old way, which may tend to the extreme hazard even of my life, as . also of my government."

Now to prevent this, he bethought himself of the following expedient: he caused to be made two golden calves, and two temples to be built, the one at Bethel, and the other at Dan,+ which is a town situate at the head of the lesser Jordan.

^{*} It was certainly a piece of great imprudence to send any one to treat with them, when they were so highly exasperated; but to send him, that was an obnoxious man, as having the principal care of the very tributes they complained of, was downright infatuation; because nothing is so natural as to hate those that are the instruments of our oppression, or any ways employed in it .-Patrick's Commentary

⁺ How the figure of a calf, or any other animal, can be a symbol of a deity, it is difficult to conceive. But a certain learned author, who seems a little singular in his opinion, will needs have it, that the golden calves, which Jeroboam made, were in imitation of the cherubim (in his account these were winged oxen) Moses had placed upon the ark of the covenant, whereon the glory of the Lord sat enthroned. These cherubim in the tabernacle of Moses, and afterwards in Solomon's temple, were placed in the sanctuary, and secreted from vulgar sight: but Jeroboam, to make his religion more condescensive, placed his calves in open view, so that every one who looked on them, might, through them, worship the God of Israel, without repairing to the temple of Jerusalem. This notion (if it were true) would make the transition easy from the worship at Jerusalem to the worship at Dan or Bethel; but we can hardly imagine that Jeroboam had either so harmless or so conformable a design, in setting up these golden images. Whatever his design was, it is certain that the scripture all along represents him as, or all others, the principal person that 'made Israel to sin;' that 'drew Israel from serving the Lord, and made them sin a great sin;' and therefore we may observe, that, whenever it describes a bad prince, one part of his character is, that he imitated the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who (as the prophet upbraids his wife) went and made

places; and having convened an assembly of the ten tribes under his command, he harangued them to this purpose: "I need not tell you, my countrymen, that God is every where, and not confined to any certain place; but wherever we are, he hears our prayers, and accepts our worship in one place as well as in another; and therefore I am not at all of opinion for your going up to Jerusalem at this time, to a people that hate you. It is a long and tedious journey, and all this only for the sake of religion. He that built that temple was but a man, as every one here is; and the golden calves that I have provided for you, the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, are consecrated as well as that temple, and so much nearer you, on purpose for the convenience of your worship; where you may pay your duty to God in such manner as best pleaseth you. As for the priests and Levites, I shall make such a provision for you, that you shall have no want, either of the tribe of Levi, or of the race of Aaron. Let him that

him other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and to cast me behind his back, saith the Lord. The truth is, Jeroboam had lived a considerable to the contract of t siderable time in the land of Egypt, had contracted an acquaintance with the king thereof and formed an interest among the people, and therefore finding himself under a necessity of making an alteration in the established religion of his country, he thought it the wisest method to do it upon the Egyptian model, that thereby he might endear himself to that nation, and, in case he met with opposition from his rival Rehoboam, might hope for assistance from that quarter. For, as the Egyptians had two oxen which they worshipped, one called Apis, at Memphis, the metro-polis of the Upper Egypt; and another called Mnevis, at Hierapolis, a principal city of the Lower; so he made two calves of gold, and placed one of them in Bethel, which was in the south; and the other in Dan, which was in the north part of the country of Israel. There was this farther reason likewise, that might determine him in the choice of these two places. Dan was a town famous for the teraphim of Micah, unto which there nad been a great resort for many ages; and Bethel was, in every one's opinion, a holy place, that which Jacob had consecrated after he had been vouchsafed the vision of the ladder, and where God had so frequently appeared to him, that he thought he had reason to call it 'the gate of heaven.'-Stackhouse

These images were consecrated in both aces; and having convened an assembly the ten tribes under his command, he rangued them to this purpose: "I need tell you, my countrymen, that God is ery where, and not confined to any cer-

This was Jeroboam's method of seducing the multitude into an apostasy from the laws of their God and of their country; and he himself, consequently, was the capital cause of those calamities that befell the Israelites,—such as foreign wars, routs, captivity, and the like.

The festival of the seventh month was now drawing on, and Jeroboam took a resolution to worship the same way at Bethel as the two tribes did at Jerusalem.

There was an altar erected before the golden calf; he himself personated the high-priest, and went up with his own priests after the manner of the templeworship.

But as he was preparing to put fire to the offering in the sight of all the people, there came out a prophet from Jerusalem in that very point of time, whose name, as Josephus informs us, was Jadon. He was sent by God; and, being advanced into the midst of the crowd, he addressed himself in the king's hearing to the altar, in words to this purpose: " Altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, There shall arise one out of the house of Judah, whose name shall be Josiah; * who upon thee shall put to death the false prophets, seducers, and impostors of those times, and upon thee shall burn their bones; and to the end that no creature may doubt the truth of

^{*} This is one of the most remarkable prophecies that we have in sacred writ. It foretells an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It describes the circumstances of the action, and specifies the very name of the person that was to do it; and therefore every Jew who lived in the time of its accomplishment must have been convinced of the divine authority of a religion founded upon such prophecies as this; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foresel, events at such a distance.—Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.

this prediction, the authority of it shall be was old; and as he lay upon his bed his now confirmed by a prodigy. The altar shall fall to pieces, and the fat of the sacrifices upon it shall be spilt upon the ground."

The king was so inflamed by these words of the prophet, that he lifted up his hand against him, and commanded aloud that somebody should lay hold on him. But his arm was immediately so benumbed and blasted, that it was like a dead limb, nor could he draw it back again. The altar fell to pieces, and the fat of the sacrifices was thrown upon the ground, as the prophet had foretold.

The king, finding by what spirit the man spoke, and that he was no counterfeit, besought him to pray to God on his behalf, for the restoring of his withered arm; which being done, and the miracle wrought, Jeroboam thankfully acknowledged the benefit of the cure, and earnestly pressed the prophet to stay and take some refreshment with him; but he excused himself, by alleging an injunction that God had laid upon him, not so much as to taste either bread or wine in that city, nor to return the same way he came.

This solemn and reserved behaviour of the prophet confirmed the king in his belief of the reality of his mission from God, and consequently excited his terror lest his predictions concerning him should be fulfilled.

There was at Bethel a certain prophet* that was in Jeroboam's favour. This man sons brought him news of a famous prophet that was come to Jerusalem, and what wonders he had done; with the story of Jeroboam's withered arm, and the recovery of it at the prophet's intercession to God for him; and how he was now gone back again, and which way he went.

The fame of this stranger created such a jealousy in the old man, that he presently ordered his sons to saddle his ass, which being immediately done, the man mounted and posted with all imaginable expedition to seek after the strange prophet. He followed him step by step, till he came up with him at last, as he was resting himself under the shadow of a large spreading

After the first salute, the old prophet desired him to return home with him, and take some refreshment. The stranger positively refused his invitation, telling him that God had forbidden him either to eat or drink in that city. But the old prophet arrogated to himself a power to forgive this deviation from the command of God, and so far prevailed upon Jadon, that he gave credit to his wicked insinuation, accepted of his invitation, and went along with him.

While they were at dinner, and in the freedom of discourse, God appeared to Jadon, and told him, that he would not only punish him for his disobedience, but the very manner of his punishment, which was, that he should be torn to pieces upon the way by a lion, and that his body should not be buried in the sepulchre of his forefathers.

It fell out accordingly, and perhaps God ordered it so for the hardening of Jeroboam's heart, into a disbelief of Jadon, upon so remarkable a miscarriage; for, in his way back to Jerusalem, a lion tore him off his ass* and killed him. The ass

^{*} The learned are divided in their sentiments concerning this prophet at Bethel. Some will needs have him to have been a false prophet, highly in esteem with Jeroboam, because he prophesied to him soft things, and such as would humour him in his wickedness. Others think more favourably of the old prophet, viz. that he was a true prophet of God, though (some say) a wicked one, not unlike the famous Balaam, who sacrificed every thing to his profit: whilst others say he was a weak one, who thought he might innocently employ an officious lie to bring the prophet of Judah back, who was under a prohibition indeed, but such an one as, in his opinion, related only to the house of Jeroboam, and such others as were of an idolatrous religion .- Josephus.

⁺ It has been asserted by those who are too ready to arraign the divine providence, that the punishment of this prophet was very inadequate to the crime he had committed, which was of a

while the lion also stood by the carcase, like a guard to both.

The relation of this disaster being brought to the old prophet by some travellers that passed that way, he appointed his sons to fetch the body into the city, which being done, he gave it a magnificent burial, charging his sons, whenever he died, to see his own body laid in the same monument. For, said he, "Whatever this good man has spoken concerning the city, the altar, the priests, and the false prophets, is all true. Now when I am dead, and my bones deposited with his, I am safe; for who shall know his bones from mine?"

As soon as Jadon's funeral rites were finished, the old prophet hastened to Jeroboam, and, observing the anxiety of his mind, inquired the cause of such extraordinary dejection, representing the folly of being affected by the words of a madman. But the king, sensibly affected, demanded of him what he thought of the prodigy of the altar, and the miraculous loss and recovery of his arm? relating both the circumstances at length. "The man," says he, "certainly is a man of God, and a true prophet, or else he could never have done all this." The other in the mean time did all he could to disguise the truth, with plausible glosses and dis-

very trivial nature, and if it merited any punishment at all, it ought to have been much milder than what was really inflicted: but, who art thou, vain man! that darest thus impiously to call in question the justice of thy Maker? This prophet had sufficient evidence of the truth of his own revelation; had sufficient cause to suspect some corrupt ends in the prophet who came to recall him; and had sufficient reason to expect an interposition of the same power that gave him the injunction, to repeal it: his crime therefore was an easy credulity, and a compliance with an offer, merely to gratify a petulant appetite, which he well knew was repugnant to a divine command. We have no reason then to say, that his crime was small, or his punishment too severe; but let as learn from hence, not to suffer our faith to be perverted by any suggestions which are made against a revelation whose authority is divine and incontestable.

remaining untouched, and standing still, tinctions. "As to the affair of your hand," says he, addressing himself to the king, "it is very probable you had overwrought yourself with carrying sacrifices to the altar. The very weariness made it numb at first, perhaps; but after a little rest, it came to itself again. Now, with respect to the altar, it was but newly built; and not being thoroughly settled, it sunk under the weight of an insupportable burden of sacrifices that were laid upon it. And, as concerning the holy man's end, he observed, that he was killed by a lion; and that there was not the least sign or token of a prophet in all this."

> The king was so corrupted with these insinuations, that from thenceforward he had no longer any thought of God or his commands; but, on the contrary, abandoned himself wholly to the love, study, and practice of all manner of wickedness; and to such a degree too, that in effect he bade defiance to all that was sacred, working all manner of iniquity with greediness.

> Rehoboam, being king all this time of the two tribes before-mentioned, built and fortified several fair and strong cities, as Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Bethzur, Shoco, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, all in the tribe of Judah, beside other towns in the lot of Benjamin, which he provided with good garrisons and governors, and with corn, oil, and other necessaries in abundance, for their maintenance and defence; beside many thousands of shields and lances.

> While Rehoboam continued at Jerusalem, there came up from all parts great numbers of priests and Levites, and as many of the laity too, as made any conscience of obeying the commandments of the God of Israel, leaving their habitations to attend his solemn worship.

> They were all weary of Jeroboam's tyranny, and forcing them to worship his calves, to the dishonour of the true God. The discontent, in fine, was so great, that

within the space of three years, the power and interest of Rehoboam was mightily increased.

The king's first wife was his kinswoman, by whom he had three children, and he afterwards married Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, by whom he had Abijah, and she was related to him too. He had several wives beside, and children by them, but none were so dear to him as Maachah. He had eighteen legitimate wives, and sixty concubines, by whom he had eight and twenty sons, and sixty daughters. Amongst whom Abijah, the son of Maachah, was the person he designed for his successor, committing his treasure and strong holds all to his trust.

But it fell out with Rehoboam, as in common with other mortals; prosperity puffed him up, and in time ruined him; for the greater he grew in the world, the more liberty he took to be wicked; * and not only contemned God and his holy commandments himself, but influenced the people by his example to the same iniquitous practices. It is natural for subjects to be depraved by the evil example of their superiors; for the virtue or the iniquity of the governor is generally a sort of rule for the people to walk by; or in other words, not to do as they do, is tacitly to condemn their doings; thus it happened to Rehoboam, where the people were wicked and licentious, for fear of displeasing the king.

Such flagrant violations of the divine law, and general depravity in a people who had received so many and signal favours from God, could not fail in meeting with the divine resentment.

ing with the divine resentment.

It pleased God therefore to avenge himself upon Rehoboam, by the hand of

*Foolish and unwise prince! to imagine himself secure amidst the most numerous legions, while he rejected that assistance which alone could preserve him, and rendered himself obnox-

ious to the indignation of that Being, by whose

sole permission kings reign and princes decree justice; who can at any time make a land barren

for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

Shishak the king of Egypt. This Shishak, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, marched against him with a vast army, the soldiers being most of them Africans and Ethiopians. With this army Shishak broke in upon the Israelites, and took into his protection several of their strong towns, that surrendered of their own accord.

In all these places he left garrisons, and marched immediately up to Jerusalem, where Rehoboam and his people were blocked up in the town.

The king in this strait betook himself to prayer and supplication for victory over his enemies, but could not prevail for an answer to his satisfaction; and thereupon Shemaiah the prophet told him, for his greater terror, that God threatened to forsake all those that first forsook him. This terrified them all into an acknowledgment of their wickedness, and of God's just judgment upon them for their apostasy and disobedience.

Being now brought to the extremity of despair,† the prophet told the king once again, that God was pleased so far to accept of their humiliation and repentance that they should not be utterly destroyed and cut off, but only delivered up in subjection and slavery to the Egyptians, that they might learn by experience whether it was better to serve God or man.

Thus alarmed, Rehoboam delivered up Jerusalem to Shishak upon certain conditions; but the conqueror, without any regard to faith or honour, broke his articles, pillaged the temple, took away all the plate and treasure, as well appertaining to the sanctuary, as to the king, to

[†] An unfeigned sorrow, and hearty contrition for sin, is an effectual method of averting the vengeance of that gracious Deity, who delights to save rather than destroy, and is ever ready to forgive the sins of all them that are penitent. And this merciful disposition these Israelites now happily experienced; for he was pleased to accept their sincere humiliation and promise of amendment, and to respite the severest part of that punishment which would otherwise have been inflicted upon them.

much as one grain behind him. He carried away the golden shields and bucklers that Solomon had caused to be made, with the golden quivers that David took, and dedicated to the adorning of the temple. After which Shishak returned to Egypt with a prodigious booty.

After the departure of Shishak into Egypt, Rehoboam repaired the loss of the golden shields and bucklers, with the same number of brass,* and committed the care of them to his proper officers and guards, and then betook himself to a life of retirement, resigning every public concern, fearing lest the continual feuds between Jeroboam and himself might in the end prove destructive to him.

He was a weak and arrogant prince, and lost, through his own misconduct, his government and his reputation. He was buried at Jerusalem, among the kings; and his son Abijah succeeded him, in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign over the ten tribes.

Having related the most memorable transactions of the life of Rehoboam, we follow the account of the sacred historian, in presenting an account of God's dealing with Jeroboam, who caused the Israelites to run into most enormous idolatries, and every abominable practice, in the sight of their God and mighty deliverer; a conduct which brought on him the just vengeance of heaven.

It happened at this time that Abijah,

an inestimable value, without leaving so his son, fahing sick, he bade his wife put herself in the disguise of a private person,+ and to go to Ahijah the prophet, a man filled with the spirit of prediction, and a person who told him formerly, that he himself should be king. "Go you," says he, "to this prophet and ask him if the boy shall recover or no." She dressed herself according to her husband's order, and went to Shiloh, where Ahijah at that time lived.

> As she was upon the way, a voice from heaven spoke to the prophet, (who was now dim-sighted with age,) informing him that the wife of Jeroboam was then coming to him; and of her business, what questions she would ask him, and what he should answer. Upon her coming to the door in the dress of an ordinary guest,

^{*} This shows to what a low condition the kingdom of Judah was reduced. These shields were a matter of state and grandeur; and therefore it was necessary, if possible, to have them of the same value that they were before; and as they were carried before the king to the house of the Lord, it seemed likewise to be a matter of religion that their value should not be diminished. Now in making these three hundred shields we are told three pounds of gold went to one shield: this, at four pounds per ounce, amounts to no more than forty-three thousand two hundred pounds; and therefore it was a miserable case, that they were reduced from so much wealth to so much poverty, that neither reasons of state nor religion could raise so small a sum on so great an occasion.

⁺ Jeroboam might be for having his wife to go to consult the prophet at Shiloh, because this was a secret not to be intrusted with any body else; a secret, which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government: because, if once his subjects came to understand that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up, but, in any matter of importance, had recourse to the true worshippers of God, it is not to be imagined what an inducement this would have been for them to forsake these senseless idols, and to return to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they imprudently had forsaken. The queen then was the only person he could have confidence in. As a mother, he knew, that she would be diligent in her inquiry; and, as a wife, faithful in her report; but there were sundry reasons why he might desire her to disguise herself. For, though Shiloh lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is sufficient ground to think that it was subject to the house of David, and belonged to the kingdom of Judah. It was certainly nearer Jerusalem than Shechem, which Rehoboam had lately fortified, and made his place of residence: and therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen in a place that was under his rival's government, without her putting on some disguise. He knew too, that the prophet Ahijah was greatly offended at him for the gross idolatry he had introduced, and therefore he thought (as justly he might) that, if the prophet perceived her to be his wife, he would either tell her nothing, or make things much worse than they were. The only way, therefore, to come at the truth, was (as he thought) to do what he did: but herein appears his infatuation, that he should not think the person, whom he held capable of resolving him in the fate of his son, able to see through this guile and disguise .- Calmet's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.

Jeroboam's wife, and thus addressed her: "Come in, and seek not to disguise yourself; for he that told me who you are, and put the words in my mouth that I am to say to you, is not to be imposed upon. Go therefore to your husband from me, and tell him, that thus saith the Lord God. As it was I that raised thee out of a low condition to the dignity of a throne; and, cutting off the family of David from the kingdom, gave it to thee; so on the other hand, in return for all these bounties and benefits, thou hast now most ungratefully cast off him that exalted thee, and set up gods of thine own fancy, and of the founder's making, in preference to the Creator of heaven and earth, and in contempt of my majesty and power; wherefore I will now forthwith expunge thee and thy family out of the roll of mankind, give your carcases to the dogs, and to the fowls of the air; and set up another king over my people, that shall not leave one living man of the house of Jeroboam upon the face of the earth; and the very multitude shall not escape the stroke of divine justice neither. For they shall be exterminated out of the good land they were possessed of, and driven away, and dispersed beyond the Euphrates, for being wicked, after their king's example, in adoring his gods, to the contempt of me and my commandments. haste therefore to your husband, and tell him as I have told you. As for your child, on your return you shall find it dead; for the very moment you enter the city, he shall breathe his last. He shall be lamented and buried with the solemnity of a public mourning, as the only person of Jeroboam's family that had any thing good in him."

The woman, greatly alarmed on hearing these tidings, immediately, and with a sorrowful heart, retraced her steps homeward, where she found, to her unspeakable grief, the prophet's words verified,-

the prophet called to her by the name of to her husband the appalling events which the prophet had foretold should befall him and his family. But, notwithstanding these awful predictions, the perverse Jeroboam, as if in defiance of the Most High, assembled forces throughout all his dominions, and marched against Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, who was the king of the two tribes in right of his father,-confident of his success against a prince of so little experience either in government or arms.

> Abijah, however, was so far from being terrified at this preparation, that he raised an army of the two tribes, and advanced with it toward Jeroboam, in a certain place called mount Zemaraim, and there encamped and prepared for battle.

> His army consisted of four hundred thousand men, and Jeroboam's double that number. The two armies being drawn up, and ready to engage, Abijah advanced to a little eminence; and from thence held up his hand to obtain silence and attention to what he had to say; the sum of which was this:

> "You cannot be ignorant of God's promises, that this kingdom should be continued to David and his posterity for many ages, even to him and his sons by a covenant of salt.* Now, this being the

^{*} It is generally thought that salt is here made an emblem of perpetuity; but the covenant of salt seems to refer to an agreement made in which salt was used as a token of confirmation. Baron du Tott says, "Moldovanji Pacha was desirous of an acquaintance with me, and seeming to regret that this business would not permit him to stay long, he departed, promising in a short time to return. I had already attended him half way down the staircase, when stopping, and turning briskly to one of my domestics who followed me, 'Bring me directly,' said he, 'some bread and salt.' I was not less surprised at this fancy, than at the haste which was made to obey him. What he requested was brought; when, taking a little salt between his fingers, and putting it with a mysterious air on a bit of bread, he ate it with a devout gravity: assuring me, that I might now rely on him. I soon procured an explanation of this significant ceremony; but this same man, when become Visir, was tempted to violate his oath, thus taken in my favour. Yet if this solemn her child was dead. She then announced contract be not always religiously observed, it

case, I cannot but wonder to see my father deserted, Jeroboam his subject, advanced to his place, and you yourselves in arms against the divine right of government that is left him, when Jeroboam hath

serves, at least, to moderate the spirit of veugeance so natural to the Turks." The Baron adds in a note: "The Turks think it the blackest ingratitude, to forget the man from whom we have received food: which is signified by the bread and salt in this ceremony." The Baron alludes to this incident in part iii. p. 36. Moldovanji Pacha, being ordered to obey the Baron, was not pleased "I did not imagine I ought to put any great confidence in the mysterious covenant of the bread and salt, by which this man had formerly vowed inviolable friendship to me." Yet he "dissembled his discontent," and "his peevishness only showed itself in his first letters to the Porte." It will now appear credible, that the phrase 'a covenant of salt' alludes to some such custom in ancient times; and without meaning to symbolize very deeply, we take the liberty of asking, whether the precept, Lev. ii. 13. 'With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt,' may have any reference to ideas of a similar nature? Did the custom of feasting at a covenant-making include the same, according to the sentiment of the Turks hinted at in the Baron's note? We ought to notice the readiness of the Baron's domestics, in proof that they well understood what was about to take place. Also, that this covenant is usually punctually observed, and where not so, has a restraining influence on the party who has made it; and his non-observance of it disgraces him. We proceed to give a remarkable instance of the power of this covenant of salt over the mind; it seems to imply a something attributed to salt, which it is very difficult for us completely to explain, but which is not the less real on that account: "Jacoub ben Laith," says D'Herbelot, "the founder of a dynasty of Persian princes called the Saffarides. rising, like many others of the ancestors of the princes of the East, from a very low state to royal power, being, in his first setting out in the use of arms, no better than a freebooter or robber, is yet said to have maintained some regard to decency in his depredations, and never to have entirely strip-ped those that he robbed, always leaving them something to soften their affliction. Among other exploits that are recorded of him, he is said to have broken into the palace of the prince of that country, and having collected a very large booty, which he was on the point of carrying away, he found his foot kicked something which made him stumble; he imagined it might be something of value, and putting it to his mouth, the better to distinguish what it was, his tongue soon informed him it was a lump of salt. Upon this, according to the morality, or rather superstition, of the country, where the people considered salt as a symbol and pledge of hospitality, he was so touched, that he left all his booty, retiring without taking any thing away with him. The next morning, the risk they had run of losing many valuable things being perceived, great was the wide."-Calmet.

with that neither, unless you can force the right heir out of the small remainder that is left him, when Jeroboam hath already by violence and usurpation engrossed the greater part of the kingdom. But he is not long to enjoy the fruit of his wickedness; for God will call him to a severe account for his iniquities, and to put an end to this course of rapine and oppression, which he himself is so far from doing that he makes it his daily business to continue and inflame a most impious sedition; and what was the true ground and reason of this defection? My father never did you any injury, only by following evil counsel, Jeroboam himself being at the bottom of it, he had the misfortune to give you an answer expressed in terms too harsh; upon which you all in great rage abandoned your duty, not only to my father, but to your God, and to his laws, and all things that are sacred. You should have weighed matters with allowances for human frailty; you should have considered that my father was a young man, and one that did not set up for an orator: you should have considered him again as the son of Solomon, your royal patron and benefactor. Now these considerations might have atoned for a few unguarded expressions; and it would have been but reason to have borne a little with the son, for the father's sake.

surprise, and strict the inquiry, what could be the occasion of their being left. At length Jacoub was found to be the person concerned; who having given an account, very sincerely, of the whole transaction to the prince, he gained his esteem so effectually, that it might be said with truth, that it was his regard for salt that laid the foundation of his after-fortune. The prince employing him as a man of courage and genius in many enterprises, and finding him successful in all of them, he raised him, by little and little, to the chief posts among his troops; so that at that prince's death, he found himself possessed of the command in chief, and had such interest in their affections, that they preferred his interests to those of the children of the deceased prince, and he became absolute master of that province, from whence he afterwards spread his conquests far and wide."—Calmet.

may judge by the army that is advancing against us. And what have you to trust to? If in your golden calves, your altars, and your high places, it is not your religion that you depend upon, but your wickedness. Besides that, you have the laws of God and man to contend with."

" Piety and justice will overcome you in the end. You manifestly fight against both, in this cause, in fighting against us, who have constantly asserted the worship and the reverence that we owe to the true God; -not a god of wood or stone, or the imposture of a wicked king upon a credulous multitude; but God, the maker of all things, the beginning and the end. Wherefore let me advise you to repent of your past sins and follies, and to betake yourselves to sounder counsels for the future: or if you must be contending, let it be for the defence of, and not in opposition to, those laws that have made you so great and happy."

While Abijah was thus piously haranguing the multitude, Jeroboam perfidiously sent a detachment to surprise his rear,* but his stratagem succeeded not; for Abijah, perceiving their amazement, exhorted them to rely on the mighty God of Israel, nor fear the power or policy of an idolatrous foe.

These words of their king dissipated their fears, and inspired them with courage and resolution; whereupon, having first invoked the assistance of God Almighty, the priests sounded the charge; at which, with a mighty shout, they attacked the enemy, and charged them so vigorously, that, with the help of God,

But these thoughts never came near your they put them to a total rout, and made hearts, nor are they ever like to do, if I such a slaughter, as cannot be paralleled in history, sacred or profane. In this tremendous destruction of human life no fewer than five hundred thousand men were slain upon the field,-a victory never to be forgotten.+ Their strongest towns were taken and plundered, as were also Bethel and Ephraim, with their dependencies.

> This blow so weakened Jeroboam, that he was never able to make any farther attempt so long as Abijah was living, who died soon after, in the third year of his reign, and was buried at Jerusalem, in the sepulchre of his ancestors. He left two and twenty sons, and sixteen daughters, all of which he had by fourteen wives.

> Asa his son succeeded him, whose mother's name was Maachah, ‡ and under

> + By this terrible and perfectly unparalleled slaughter of 500,000 men of the newly idolatrous and rebellious ten tribes, God's high displeasure and indignation against that idolatry and rebellion fully appeared; the remainder were thereby seriously cautioned not to persist in them, and a kind of balance or equilibrium was made between the ten and the two tribes for the time to come; while otherwise the perpetually idolatrous and rebellious ten tribes would naturally have been too powerful for the two tribes, which were pretty frequently free both from such idolatry and rebellion; nor is their any reason to doubt of the truth of the prodigious number slain upon so signal an occasion .- Whiston.

> I Maachah was Asa's natural grandmother, and is here represented as still maintaining the title and dignity of king's mother. Mr Baruh suggests that the phrase, 'And his mother's name was,' &c. when expressed on a king's accession to the throne, at the beginning of his history, does not always imply that the lady whose name is then mentioned was the king's natural mother; and conceives that 'the king's mother,' when so introduced, is only a title of honour and dignity enjoyed by one lady, solely, of the royal family at a time, denoting her to be the first in rank, chief sultana, or queen-dowager, whether she happened to be the king's natural mother or not. That the title and place of 'king's mother' is of great consequence, we learn from Bruce, in his account of Abyssinia, who represents the Iteghe as interfering much in public affairs, keeping a separate palace and court, possessing great influence, authority, &c. He also informs us, that while any Iteghe is living, it is contrary to law to crown another; which accounts at once for Asa's Iteghe, or 'king's mother,' being his grandmother, the same person as held that dignity before he came to the crown.

^{*} Though Jeroboam did not attempt to answer the speech of Abijah, yet he was certainly touched with it; and being fearful that it might have such an effect upon his troops as to make them decline the battle had they been regularly led on to the charge, he had recourse to stratagem, and endeavoured to compass that by artifice, which he was apprehensive of failing in, from the use of fair and honourable methods.

peace for ten years.

This is the substance of what is recorded concerning Abijah, who was soon followed in the path of mortality by Jeroboam, the king of the ten tribes, in the second year of the reign of Asa, and the

twenty-second of his own.

His son Nadab, who succeeded him, lived in a kind of competition for profaneness and impiety with the character of his father, and reigned only two years; in which time he led out an army against Gibbethon, a city of the Philistines, being possessed with an opinion that he might take it by siege; but in the mean time he was cut off by the treachery of a familiar friend, whose name was Baasha, who seized upon the government, and destroyed the whole family; which verified the words of the prophet, "That the dogs should eat him of Jeroboam's stock that died in the city, and the fowls of the air should eat him that died in the field."

This was the end of Jeroboam and his family, for their apostasy from the Lord their Maker.

CHAPTER V.

Amiable character of king Asa .- Is prospered by God in his military undertakings .- God's judgment on Baasha, king of Israel .- Zimri's conspiracy against his son and successor .-Wicked Ahab succeeds to the throne of Israel. -His ruin foretold by a prophet.-Naboth slain at the instance of Jezebel .- The prophet again predicts the destruction of Ahab, whose repentance respites part of the vengeance, till the days of his son.

KING Asa, possessed with a holy awe of the majesty of God, the mighty deliverer of Israel, acted in strict conformity to his holy will, and was a shining example of piety and justice to all his subjects. He rectified all that he found amiss in his government, and purged his dominions from all extravagant lusts and foreign abominations. He had a select body of men armed with lances and shields, to the

his government the Israelites enjoyed number of three hundred thousand of the tribe of Judah; and of the tribe of Benjamin, he had two hundred and fourscore thousand, with bows and bucklers.

> In the tenth year of his reign, Zerah, a king of Ethiopia,* marched against him with an army of nine hundred thousand foot, one hundred thousand horse, and three hundred chariots.

> When he was advanced as far as Mareshah, a city in the dependency of Judah, Asa went out to meet him, and ranged his army not far from the city, in a certain valley called Zephathah.

Upon the sight of so prodigious a multitude, Asa called out to God for his . assistance, that he would vouchsafe to prosper his arms, and give him victory over so formidable an enemy; for it was wholly in a dependence upon his divine goodness that he had now undertaken this enterprise. Upon this prayer of Asa's God was pleased to encourage him with a token and assurance of victory.

In the divine strength, Asa charged the enemy with such bravery, that with great slaughter he pursued them to the plain of Gerar; and there desisting from the pursuit, he spoiled Gerar itself, and likewise the enemy's camp, from which he took a vast booty in gold, camels, flocks, and herds.

Upon gaining this mighty victory, through the goodness of divine provi-

^{*} Zerah, king of Egypt, is in scripture termed an Ethiopian or Cushite; an appellation which perhaps marks the origin of the dynasty to which he belonged. Interpreters have long been perplexed to ascertain where the dominions of Zerah were situated; some supposing him to be a king of Cushite Arabia (although there is no evidence that that country then had powerful sovereigns), while others have imagined that he was king of Abyssinia or African Ethiopia, but without being able to explain how he could have traversed Egypt, in order to penetrate into Judea. All these difficulties are now removed. The name of this king exists on ancient monuments; and the Zerah of scripture is the Osorchon or Osoroth of the Egyptian lists and legends, the second king of the twenty-second dynasty, the son and successor of Shishak, who was contemporary with Rehoboam .- Horne.

to Jerusalem, laden with spoil.

On their return home, Asa was met by the prophet Azariah, who thus addressed him with all the people: "God hath been pleased to bless you with this glorious victory, in consideration of your justice, your piety, and obedience to his will and commandments; and if you go on as you have begun, you may expect the same providential advantages in all your affairs for the time to come. But if ever you depart from the precepts of your God, you will find in all respects the contrary; and the time will come, wherein there shall not be a true prophet among you, nor a priest answerable to the dignity of his function. Your cities shall be laid level with the ground; your nation scattered like vagabonds over the earth, without any seat or habitation that they can call their own. Wherefore let me advise you, while you have time, to apply yourselves to the study and practice of the good and acceptable pleasure of the Lord; and finally, to join with thanksgiving in the acknowledgment and enjoyment of the blessings of God's favour."

These words of the prophet did greatly rejoice the hearts both of the king and people, who thereupon attended to the advice of the prophet, carefully observing every ordinance and precept of the Lord their God. And the king gave a full and express order for the utter demolition of all idols, through Judea and Benjamin, and the cities he had conquered, as well as repaired the altar and temple of the only true God.

Having thus considered the character and administration of Asa, king of the two tribes, we proceed to Baasha, king of the Israelites; who, when he had killed Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, seized his kingdom.

This prince, whose palace was in Tirzah,* reigned four years in all sorts of

dence, the king returned with his army | lewdness and impiety; he went beyond either Jeroboam or his son, and was a tyrannical oppressor of his people, and a stubborn and contumacious spirit toward God himself; insomuch that the word of the Lord came to Jehu the prophet, commanding him to tell Baasha, that God had fully determined to root out him and his family from off the earth, as he had done Jeroboam before him, for his ingratitude to that power and goodness that raised him to the throne, and for his tyranny and impiety in the exercise of his government, without any regard to righteousness or justice. Also informing him farther, that since he thought fit to make Jeroboam his example, for all manner of iniquity, it was but reasonable that he should resemble him in his misery and punishment.

> Baasha, after these awful denunciations, obstinately persisted, as if resolved to affront his Maker, and as if the prophet had rather promised him a reward for his wickedness than threatened him with so dreadful a vengeance, striving daily to exceed in impiety and profaneness, heaping sins upon sins, without any care or thought how to avert the judgment, and reconcile himself to God; nay, without the least disposition towards amendment or repentance. In the conclusion, he marched with an army to Ramah, a place

the regal city of the kings of Israel. Jeroboam, the first king, though he dwelt for some time at Shechem, yet he appears to have fixed in his latter days his royal residence at Tirzah. The succeeding kings kept their residence in the same city, till Omri, after reigning six years at Tirzah, removed the royal seat to Samaria, I Kings xvi. 24, where it afterwards continued till a final period was put to the kingdom of Israel. It appears from Cant. vi. 4, that this was a very beautiful city, and pleasant to dwell in; on which account, probably, it was selected for the royal seat. Nothing is said about this place in scripture from which we can determine its situation, nor is any light afforded us on the subject by any writer of authority. Thus we can rest only on conjectures; but, as Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, and might therefore be disposed to fix his residence there, it is inferred, with some probability, that Tirzah was situated somewhere within that tribe. _Dr Wells.

^{*} This city is frequently mentioned in scripture, because it appears to have been for a long time

of some note, about six miles from Jerusalem. He took it, and fortified it, with an intent to make it the seat of the war, as a commodious station for the advantage of many inroads into the dominions of Asa.

Now Asa was not without some apprehension of his design; and reflecting with himself, how great danger the neighbourhood of so powerful an army might bring upon his country, he despatched ambassadors to the king of Damascus, with money and presents, inviting him over to his alliance, out of respect to the former friendship that had subsisted betwixt those two families.

The king willingly received the money and the presents; broke off with Baasha, entered into a league with Asa, and sent an army soon after into the territory of Baasha, fell upon his towns and strongholds, burning some, and rifling others,—as Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, which was a country bordering on a lake of the same name.*

Upon the news of this incursion, the king of the Israelites quitted Ramah, and proceeded nearer home; but Asa erected two strong towns there, out of the materials that Baasha had left behind him;

drawn up, and softer than river or fountain water: and it is so cold, that the people of the place cannot warm it by setting it in the sun, in the hottest season of the year. There are several kinds of fish in it, different both to the taste and sight from those elsewhere. It is divided into two parts by the river Jordan." The fidelity of Josephus's description is attested by two learned and acute modern travellers. Mr Buckingham, and acute modern travellers. who beheld it in 1816, observes that "all these features are drawn with an accuracy that could only have been attained by one resident in the country. The size is still nearly the same, the borders of the lake still end at the beach or the sands, at the feet of the mountains which environ it. Its waters are still as sweet and temperate as ever, and the lake abounds with great numbers of fish of various sizes and kinds. The appearance of the lake as seen from Capernaum," Mr Buckingham states, "is still grand; its greatest length runs nearly north and south from twelve to fifteen miles; and its breadth seems to be, in general, from six to nine miles. The barren aspect of the mountains on each side, and the total absence of wood, give, however, a cast of dulness to the pic-ture; and this is increased to melancholy by the dead calm of its waters and the silence which reigns throughout its whole extent, where not a boat or vessel of any kind is to be found." Dr Clarke, by whom this lake was visited a few years before Mr Buckingham's arrival, describes it as longer and finer than our Cumberland and West-moreland lakes, although it yields in majesty to the stupendous features of Loch Lomond in Scotland: like our Windermere, the lake of Gennesareth is often greatly agitated by winds. A strong current marks the passage of the Jordan through the middle of this lake; and when this is opposed by contrary winds, which blow here with the force of a hurricane from the south-east, sweeping into the lake from the mountains, a boisterous sea is instantly raised: this the small vessels of the country are 'll qualified to resist. "The wind," says he, "rendered its surface rough, and called to mind the situation of our Saviour's disciples; when, in one of the small vessels, which traversed these waters, they were tossed in a storm, and saw Jesus in the fourth watch of the night walking to them upon the waves." These agitations, however, do not last for any length of time.-Its broad and extended surface, covering the bottom of a profound valley, environed by lofty and precipitous eminences (excepting only the narrow entrance and outlets at the Jordan at each extremity,) added to the impression of a certain reverential awe under which every Christian pilgrim approaches it, give it a character of dignity unparalleled by any similar scenery. When not agitated by tempests, the water is stated to be as clear as the purest crystal, sweet, cool, and most refreshing to the taste .- Horne.

^{*} This lake is also called the sea of Tiberias, from a town of that name on its western border; the sea of Galilee, from the province of Galilee in general, and the lake of Gennesareth, from that particular tract of Galilee which skirted its western border. This capacious lake, almost equal in the grandeur of its appearance to that of Geneva. spreads its transparent waters over all the lower territory of Galilee, extending from the north-east to the south-west. The waters of the northern part of this lake abound with fish: this circumstance marks the propriety of our Lord's parable of the net cast into the sea, which was delivered by him from a vessel near the shore. The fish are said to be most delicious. There is not much variety, but the best sort is the most common; it is a species of bream, equal to the finest perch. It is remarkable, that there is not a single boat of any description on the lake at present; and the fish are caught, partly by the fishermen going into the water, up to their waist, and throwing in a hand net, and partly with casting nets from the beach: a method which must yield a very small quantity, compared to what they would get with boats. Pliny states this lake to be sixteen miles in length by six miles in breadth. Josephus, whose intimate knowledge of his country gives his descriptions a high claim to attention, says that "its breadth is forty furlongs, and its length one hundred and forty. Its waters are sweet and very agreeable for drinking, for they are finer than the thick waters of other fens. The lake is also pure, and on every side ends directly at the shores, and as the sand: it is also of a temperate nature, when

calling the one Geba, and the other himself and the house together, in the

This was the last of Baasha's military adventures; for he was cut off by Creon, and the people immediately divided into and buried in the city of Arsanes, and his son Elah succeeded him; he himself being afterwards treacherously slain by Zimri, the master of one division of his horse, in the second year of his reign, as he was drinking with Arza, the steward of his house, -a troop of horse breaking in upon him, in the absence of his guards and officers, who were then abroad at the siege of Gibbethon,* a city of the Philistines.

Zimri, after this exploit, advanced himself from master of the horse to the throne; and, according to the prediction of Jehu, totally extinguished the race of Baasha, which was utterly rooted out for their wickedness, after the method of the destruction that befell Jeroboam.

The news of the king's death coming to Gibbethon, when the army was before the town, and that Zimri, the assassin, had taken the government to himself, the army chose Omri the captain of the guards for their king, who raised the siege, and immediately attacked Tirzah, and took it by storm.

withdraws himself into a private apartment in the palace, sets fire to it,+ and burns

seventh day of his reign.

All things were now in confusion, two factions, the one for Tibni, and the other for Omri; but the latter carried it; for Tibni was slain, and Omri had the whole government to himself.

This was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Asa; and Omri governed twelve years, six at Tirzah and the rest at Shemer, which the Greeks call Samaria.t

I Samaria was built on an agreeable and fruit

ful hill, in an advantageous situation, twelve miles

from Dothaim, twelve from Merrom, and four from Atharoth. Josephus says, it was a day's journey from Jerusalem. Though built on an

eminence, it must have had water in abundance;

since we find medals struck there on which is represented the goddess Astarte, at whose feet is a

river. The kings of Israel omitted nothing to ren-

der this city the strongest, the finest, and the richest, possible. Ahab here built a palace of ivory, and Amos describes it under Jeroboam II. as a city sunk in excess of luxury and effeminacy. Benhadad, king of Syria, built public places or streets, probably for traffic, where his people dwelt, to promote commerce. His son Benhadad besieged it, under the reign of Ahab, but was defeated by a handful of young men. The following year Ben-hadad brought an army into the field, probably with a design to march against Samaria; but his army was again destroyed. Some years after this he came again before Samaria, and reduced it to such extremities by famine, that a mother was forced to eat her own child; but the city was relieved by a striking interposition of Divine providence. It was besieged by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, in the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, which was the fourth of Hezekiah, king of Zimri finding the city without a guard, Judah; (A.M. 3280;) and it was taken three years after, 2 Kings xvii. 6, 7, &c. The prophet Hosea * This was a city in the tribe of Dan, and given speaks of the cruelties exercised by Shalmaneser; to the Levites for their habitation, Josh. xix. 44. and Micah says the city was reduced to a heap of stones. The Cuthites sent by Esarhaddon to in-habit the country of Samaria, did not think it and xxi. 23. but they seem to have quitted it, as they did the rest of the cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to exercise their office, and worth their while to repair the ruins of this city, but dwelt at Shechem, which they made their capital. However, the Cuthites rebuilt some part of Samaria, since Ezra speaks of its inhabitants, Ezra iv. 17. Neh. iv. 2. The Samaritans being jealous of the favours Alexander the Great conferred on the Landau of the Capital the Philistines, it is likely, then seized upon it, as being adjoining to their country. It seems, how-ever, to have been a place of no inconsiderable strength, since we find that it maintained a siege for three kings' reigns successively, though with some interruption; I Kings xvi. 15, 16. ferred on the Jews, revolted from him, while he + Some would rather have it, that Omri set the was in Egypt, and burnt alive Andromachus, royal palace on fire in order to burn Zimri in it, whom he had left governor. Alexander took Sawho had retired thither. The Hebrew words inmaria, and sent Macedonians to inhabit it; giving deed will bear that construction, but the other sense seems to be more likely. Nor has profane history forgot to preserve the memory of some the country around it to the Jews; and to encourage them to cultivate it, he granted them ex-emptions from tribute. But the kings of Egypt and Syria, who succeeded Alexander, deprived them of this country. Alexander Balas, king of princes who have chosen to die in this manner rather than fall by the sword, whereof Sardanapalus is one of the most ancient and most notorious Syria, restored to Jonathan Maccabæus the cities

examples .- Calmet's Commentary.

man's name that sold the mountain, whereupon it was built.

He differed little from the former kings;

rated from the country of Samaria. And the Jews resumed the full possession of it under John Hir-canus, who took Samaria, and ruined it, according to Josephus, so that the river ran through its ruins, A. M. 3995. It so continued till Aulus Gabinius, proconsul of Syria, rebuilt it, and named it Gabiniana. But it was very inconsiderable till Herod the Great restored it to its ancient lustre, and gave it the Greek name of Sebaste, (in Latin Augusta,) in honour of the emperor Augustus, who had given him the proprietory of it. Samaria is never called Sebaste in the New Testament, though strangers hardly knew it by any other name. Jerome says it was thought Obadiah was buried at Samaria. They also showed there the tombs of Elisha and of John the Baptist. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela says, "Sebaste is Samaria, where the palace of Ahab, king of Israel, is still known. Now, that city was on a mountain, and well fortified, had springs, well watered land, gardens, paradises, vineyards, and olive-yards. Distant eight miles is Neapolis, that is Sychem, in mount Ephraim. It is seated in a valley between the mountains Gerizim and Ebal; in it are about a hundred Cutheans, observing the law of Moses only; they are called Samaritans; and have priests of the seed of Aaron. They sacrifice in the temple on mount Gerizim on the day of the passover, and on feast days on the altar built there

of the stones set up by the children of Israel, when they passed over Jordan."

The following is the account of the modern city, as given by Richardson: "Its situation is extremely beautiful, and strong by nature; more so, I think, than Jerusalem. It stands on a fine large insulated hill, compassed all round by a broad deep valley; and when fortified, as it is stated to have been by Herod, one would have imagined, that in the ancient system of warfare, nothing but famine would have reduced such a place. The valley is surrounded by four hills, one on each side, which are cultivated in terraces to the top, sown with grain and planted with fig and olivetrees, as is also the valley. The hill of Samaria, likewise, rises in terraces to a height equal to any of the adjoining mountains. The present village is small and poor, and, after passing the valley, the ascent to it is very steep, but viewed from the station of our tents, is extremely interesting, both from its natural situation, and from the picturesque remains of a ruined convent of good Gothic architecture. Having passed the village, towards the middle of the first terrace, there is a number of columns still standing. I counted twelve in one row, besides several that stood apart, the brotherless remains of other rows. The situation is extremely delightful; and my guide informed me that they belonged to the serai or palace. On the next terrace there are no remains of solid building, but heaps of stone and lime, and rubbish mixed with the soil in great profusion. Ascend-

He gave it the name of Samaria from the | for they all made it their business to alienate the people's hearts from the love and service of God, by the repeated practices of every abomination; wherefore God in his wrath made use of them successively for the destruction of one another, till, in the end, the whole race was extinct.

> This prince died at Samaria, and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

In the course of this history, the wisdom and justice of an all-seeing, all-wise God, are manifestly displayed in discovering the sins of the wicked and obedience of the righteous; and also in the punishment of the former, and reward of the latter; for the kings of the Israelites were in a short time cut off, with their whole families, by the hands of one another; only Asa, king of Jerusalem and of the two tribes, lived happily, and in the favour of God, to a great age, in consideration of his piety and justice; and after a reign of one and forty years, departed this life with comfort.

His son Jehoshaphat, that he had by Abida, succeeded him, and imitated his father in a pious obedience to the divine commands, and righteous administration towards his people, proposing the conduct of holy David as his highest and invariable example.

ing to the third, or highest terrace, the traces of former buildings were not so numerous, but we enjoyed a delightful view of the surrounding country. The eye passed over the deep valley that compasses the hill of Sebaste, and rested on the mountains beyond, that retreated as they rose with a gentle slope, and met the view in every di-rection, like a book laid out for perusal on a writing desk. From this lofty eminence we descended to the south side the hill, where we saw the remains of a stately colonnade that stretches along this beautiful exposure from east to west. Sixty columns are still standing in one row; the shafts are plain, and fragments of Ionic volutes, that lie scattered about, testify the order to which they belong. These are probably the relics of some of the magnificent structures with which Herod the Great adorned Samaria. None of the walls remain." The population of Samaria in 1819 was computed by Mr Rae Wilson at nearly 10,000 souls, composed of Turks, Arabs, and Greeks, and a few Jews of the Samaritan sect.—Calmet.

Ahab, king of the Israelites, fixed his Elijah, a Tishbite, + and born in the city of in the government. He followed the steps of the worst of his predecessors, and most particularly of Jeroboam, not only in worshipping golden calves; but in multiplying all manner of heinous offences.

He took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal,* the king of Tyre and Sidon, who drew him over to the idolatry of her country. She was a woman of a rash, enterprising temper, and of so impetuous and ungovernable spirit, that she had the confidence to erect a temple to Baal, the God of the Tyrians; to plant groves for superstition, of all sorts of trees, and to appoint her priests and false prophets expressly for that idolatrous service.

Such persons and practices were wellpleasing to Ahab, who was disposed for the commission of any heinous offence, and exceeded in wickedness all his predecessors. There came to Ahab, about that time, a certain prophet, whose name was

residence at Samaria, where he ruled two Gilead. His message was to tell the king, and twenty years, without any innovation that from the time of his going away, there should not be one drop of rain, or so much as the least sign of dew in that province, till his return; confirming his prediction with a strong affirmation that it should be so.

> As soon as he had delivered his errand. he went away to the southward, till he came to the brook Cherith, where he might supply himself with water, and there he stopped for the present; the ravens, time after time, bringing him a supply of meat.‡

> + Thesbe was a town on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead. where this prophet was born, or at least inhabited for some time. Since the scripture makes no mention, either of the quality of his parents, the manner of his education, or his call to the prophetic office, the Jewish doctors have formed some very fanciful conjectures respecting him. Some have been of opinion, that he was an angel sent from heaven, in the midst of the general corruption of the world, to preserve the true worship of God. Others pretend that he was a priest, descended from the tribe of Aaron; that his father's name was Sabaca, and his birth altogether miraculous; whilst others again will needs have it, that he was Phinehas, the son of Aaron, who, after having lived a long while concealed, appeared again in the world under the name of Elijah. But where the scripture is silent, all particulars of this kind are of small authority. This, however, may be said with safety of him, that he was one of the chief, if not the prince of the prophets of his age; a man of a great and elevated soul, of a generous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of the violations of his honour.—Calmet's Commentary.

> ‡ It is a singular circumstance, that the raven, an unclean bird, and one too of very gross and impure dispositions, was chosen by Jehovah to provide for his servant Elijah. So improbable is the story in the ear of reason, that morose and voracious ravens should become caterers for the prophet, that some interpreters have maintained that the original word denotes merchants or Arabians, or the inhabitants of the city Arbo: according to this interpretation, the promise would run; I have commanded the Arabs or the Orebim to nourish thee. But in the neighbourhood of Jordan, where Elias concealed himself, were no Arabs, no Orebim, and no city which bore the name of Arbo. Add to this, Elias was commanded to hide himself there; but how could he hide himself, if the inhabitants of the city or encampment knew of his retreat, as they must have done, if his dealing substitutes a decay day, and the second control of the city or encampment them of his retreat, as they must have done, and the second control of the city or encampment them. if his daily subsistence depended upon their bounty. On this occasion a number of rayens

^{*} Ethbaal, or Ithobalus (as he is called by profane writers) does equally signify the 'Strength of Baal.' In the catalogue of the kings of Tyre, he is said to be the eighth; and, as both Tyre and Sidon were from the beginning subject to the same king, it is not improbable, that their kings resided sometimes at one, and sometimes at the other city, and were therefore called the kings of Tyre or Sidon promiscuously. As the character of king and priest were frequently united in the same person, so is he supposed to have been the high-priest of Astarte or Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and for this reason perhaps his daughter was so violently attached to that kind of idolatry, that, when she came into power, she was for utterly extirpating all the priests and prophets of the Lord. The truth is, this queen was a monster in her kind, and therefore the name of Jezebel has passed into a proverb, to denote any cruel, impious, and imperious woman Calmet

Baal, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies Lord, and, as Selden observes, was anciently the name of the true God, until the world grew wicked, and came to apply it to the sun; in after-ages, to other stars; and, in process of time, to any of their kings, whose memory was dear to them. The same author observes, that the Phœnician Belus, or Baal, was the same with the European Jupiter, and, as Sidon was situated on the sea, their Baal was called by the Greeks, the Jupiter of the sea. But more of this you may see in the writings of that great man.—Selden de Diis Syris.

The grought continuing and increasing, the channel was dried up; whereupon God warned the prophet to remove to

were employed, because the service of one was not sufficient to supply the prophet with daily food. But the circumstance entirely accords with the native instincts of that bird; for the ravens go in quest of their prey in troops, and share in common the spoils of the chase. Following, therefore, the instincts of their nature, which received for a time a peculiar direction, by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah, a number of ravens associated together, in order to supply the wants of Elijah, whom his country had abandoned to the rage of an impious and cruel monarch; 'and they brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.' The Septuagint, in many copies read the passage; 'They brought bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening;' but the common reading is entitled to the preference. It gives a striking dis-play of divine goodness, that when the whole resources of Israel were exhausted by a long and severe famine, the prophet of the Lord was miraculously and abundantly supplied with nutritious food twice every day. The ravens brought it in the evening and in the morning, which were the stated hours of repast among the Jews and other oriental nations. The Hebrew writers eagerly inquire where the ravens found the provisions to supply the wants of Elijah; and, as may be supposed, very different are the opinions they advance; but on this question, which is of little importance, no certainty can be obtained. The scriptures are silent on the subject, and we have no other means of information. It was enough for the prophet, that his winged providers regularly supplied his necessities; and it is sufficient to excite our admiration of the power and goodness of God, and our confidence in his providential care, without attempting to discover what the divine wisdom has seen meet to conceal. When he gives the commandment, a raven is as successful in his service, according to the range of its faculties, as an angel; and we must not presume to refuse or slight his aid, how mean soever the agent he condescends to employ. The Jewish legislator placed the raven in the list of unclean birds, which imparted pollution to every thing they touched; but the same God who gave the law, had a right to repeal or suspend it; and that he did suspend it for a time, in favour of his persecuted servant, cannot be reasonably denied. Nor was this a singular instance of divine clemency; for the observance of ceremonial institutions often yielded to urgent necessity. The Jews were forbidden to touch a dead carcase; but Samson was allowed, for a special purpose, to eat of the honey which he found in the dead lion. The priests only were permitted by the law to eat the show-bread; yet David and his men were justified by our Lord himself in using the consecrated loaves, when no other could be procured. Many are the reasons assigned by different writers, for the employment of ravens on this occasion; but they are so trifling, or so fanciful, that it is unnecessary to state them;

Zarephath, * situated betwixt Tyre and Sidon; a voice from heaven foretelling him, that he should find a widow woman there, who would feed and provide for him.

the true reason perhaps was to convince the dejected prophet, that although his nation had forsaken him, the God whom he served continued to watch over him with unceasing care; and that he would employ the most unpromising means, and counteract the most powerful instincts, rather than suffer him to want the necessaries of life. And when he saw those voracious birds, the cravings of whose appetite are seldom entirely satisfied, part, of their own accord, with their favourite provision, morning and evening, for many days, and bring it themselves to the place of his retreat; he could not mistake or disregard the secret influence under which they acted.—The brook Cherith, on whose border the miracle was wrought, is supposed to be the same as the river Kana, mentioned in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Joshua, which watered the confines of Ephraim and Benjamin. This brook derived its name Kana, from the reeds, which, in great abundance, clothed its banks; among which the prophet found a secure retreat from the persecution of his enemies. Its other name Cherith, may be traced to the verb Charah, which the Greek interpreters render to feed, because on its margin the prophet was fed by the ravens. Were this conjecture true, the name must have been given by anticipation; for which no satisfactory reason can be assigned. It is more natural to suppose, that, as the verb commonly signifies to dig, and sometimes to rush on with violence, the name Cherith alludes to the violent rapidity of the stream at certain seasons of the year, or to the deep pits which, like many other torrents in those regions, it excavates in its furious The particular situation of this brook is more distinctly marked by the sacred historian, who says, it 'is before Jordan.' This phrase seems to mean, that it flowed into the Jordan; and from the second clause of the verse we may infer, that its course lay on the west side of the river, because it is said by God to Elijah, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thy-self by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan? for Elijah must have been on the west side of Jordan, when he was commanded to go eastward to a stream that flowed into the Jordan on that side. - Paxton.

* Zarephath, or, as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta, was a town which lay between Tyre and Sidon, but somewhat nearer to the latter. Mr Maundrell observes, that it is the same with what is now called Sarphan, distant about three hours' travel from Sidon, in the way to Tyre. The same author tells us, that it consists of no more than a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, about half a mile from the sea; though there is reason to believe, that the principal part of the city stood below, in a space between the hills and the sea, because there are still ruins there to be seen of a very considerable

extent .- Wells's Geography.

He followed his order, and being come almost to the end of his journey, saw a poor woman gathering sticks, not far from the port. This woman he understood, by a divine impulse, was to be his nurse, so he called to her to give him a little water to drink; and as she was going to fetch it, he spoke to her again to bring him likewise a little bread. The woman solemnly protested to him, that she had nothing in the house but one handful of meal and a little oil, and that she was now getting a few sticks for a fire to bake a cake for herself and her son; and when that was eaten, they must even starve, it being her all.

But the prophet encouraged her with these words: "Go thy ways with a good heart, and hope for better things, and bring me a piece of it when it is ready; for I do assure thee, that when we have all eaten our fill, thy barrel shall never be without meal, nor thy cruse without oil, till God shall send rain upon the earth."

The woman did as the prophet bade her, and found his words to be true; for they had all three sustenance sufficient, and the provision was still recruited again as it wasted, till this miserable drought was over.*

About this time the woman's son of the house fell sick and died; and the mother, in her passionate grief for the loss of her boy, laid the blame upon the prophet, exclaiming, "This man, that I have entertained, hath discovered my sins, and now brought this judgment upon me." The child being absolutely given over for dead, the prophet bade the woman com-

He followed his order, and being come most to the end of his journey, saw a per woman gathering sticks, not far from the port. This woman he understood, a divine impulse, was to be his nurse, he called to her to give him a little ater to drink; and as she was going to the total to her again to bring the store him to his property of the child into him, and restore him to life.

God was pleased, upon the prophet's supplication, to restore the child to life again, that the poor woman might not have any misfortune to complain of while the prophet was in the family; and the woman, with great thankfulness to the prophet, found herself now fully convinced that he was authorized and directed by the Spirit of God.

The prophet, soon after this, by the commandment of God, was sent to Ahab, to tell him that there should suddenly be rain. The famine having prevailed so long throughout the country, there was so general a scarcity of all necessaries of life, that not only the people were ready to starve for want of bread, but the very cattle also, for want of forage,—so parching was the drought.

In this distress the king sent for Obadiah,† the overseer of his stables and grounds, and commanded him to search every where about the brooks and rivers

Menander speaks of it in the history of Ithobal, a king of the Tyrians, "In his time," says he, "there was an extreme drought for want of rain, that lasted from the month of Hyperberetæus, till the same month again next year. There were prayers indeed put up for the averting of the judgment, which were followed with mighty claps of thunder. This prince built Botrys in Phænicia, and Auzates in Africa." This was undoubtedly the drought under Abab; for it was in his reign that Ithobal was king of Tyre, as Menander has it in his Commentaries.

[†] There are some Jewish doctors, who think, that this Obadiah was the same with him, whose writings we have among the twelve minor prophets. They pretend, that he was married to that woman of Shunem, where Elisha used to lodge; that he was a disciple of the prophet Elijah, and the last of the three captains whom king Ahaziah sent to apprehend him; and that for this reason, he had compassion on him, though he destroyed the others that came before him, with fire from heaven, 2 Kings 1. 9, &c. but this is altogether uncertain. Obadiah himself, in his discourse with Elijah, sufficiently tells us who he was, viz. a person truly religious, who worshipped God alone, and had a singular affection for his servants; enough, one would think, to have made Ahab discard, if not persecute him, had he not found him so highly useful in the management of his domestic affairs, as to connive at his not worshipping Baal, or the calves; especially since we read nothing of his going up to Jerusalem, which was a defect that God perhaps might think proper to dispense with.— Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.

for grass for his horses and herds; and charging him by all means to get Elijah the prophet to him, whom they had long sought most earnestly. Having delivered this charge, Ahab proceeded one way and Obadiah another, in quest of the prophet.

Now Obadiah, who was a good and holy man, at the time when queen Jezebel was in the heat of her bloody persecution against the prophets, concealed and protected a hundred of them in caves, and fed them with bread and water.* king and Obadiah were no sooner parted, than the latter met Elijah upon the way; and finding who he was, by his answering a question proposed to him, did him reverence. The prophet, after a while, desired Obadiah to go to the king, and tell him that he was coming. But Obadiah, astonished at the command, and fearful of Ahab's resentment, thus expostulated with him: "What have I done, to be sent on such an errand, to a person that is at this time seeking you to put you to death; and there is no torment you are not to expect when he catches you? But what when I go to the king, if the Spirit that governs you should carry you another way, and when you are not to be found, my head may lie at stake to answer for you? Therefore be not so indifferent in a case where my life is in so much danger. You may assure yourself, I do not want

affection for your party, that ran the risk of preserving a hundred of your prophets from the rage of Jezebel, and to this day maintain them in caves upon my own account." The prophet, however, banished the fear of pious Obadiah by these words: "Well, fear nothing; but go to the king, and promise, upon my solemn oath, that I will come to him." As soon as Ahab understood that Elijah was there, he mended his pace, and in indignation, advancing toward him, called out: "Are you, at this day, the troubler of Israel? Are you the occasion of this drought and famine?"

Elijah told him, that it was Ahab and his family, and their bringing in foreign and false gods, and the suppressing of the worship of the true God, that was the cause of all their misery. He then, to confirm his declaration, proposed to him this direction: "Give order for all the people to assemble upon mount Carmel, and let your own and your wife's prophets be there also," expressing the very number of them. "Summon likewise the prophets of your groves, who are about four hundred, to assemble also." The king accordingly summoned them; and they having met, Elijah, standing in the midst of the throng, addressed them in this manner: "How long will ye stand wavering between two opinions.+ If you believe ours to be the true and the only God, obey him, and keep his command-

^{*} We can hardly imagine, that all these hundred, whom Obadiah preserved, were men actually inspired, and invested with a prophetic character, but such only as were the disciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office. For it is not unlikely, that, even to Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets, which she endeavoured to destroy, as well as those that were bred up in them, that there might none be left to instruct the people in the true religion. These she certainly looked upon as enemies to her idolatry, and might possibly persuade her husband, that they were disaffected to his government, and favourers of the kings of Judah, because they worshipped the same God, and thought that the proper place of his worship was Jerusalem: and therefore the greater was the piety and courage of Obadiah, in rescuing so many victims from the hands of this furious and enraged woman .- Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

[†] Literally, 'How long hop ye about upon two boughs?' This is a metaphor taken from birds hopping about from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle. Perhaps the idea of limping through lameness should not be overlooked. They were halt, they could not walk uprightly they dreaded Jehovah, and therefore could not totally abandon him; they feared the king and queen, and therefore thought they must embrace the religion of the state. Their conscience forbade them to do the former; their fear of man persuaded them to do the latter; but in neither were they heartily engaged; and at this juncture their minds seemed in equipoise, and they were waiting for a favourable opportunity to make their decision. Such an opportunity now, through the mercy of God, presented itself.—Dr A. Clarke.

the worshipping of strange gods, adhere morning till noon, cutting and lancing to them only." The people making no their bodies,‡ after their manner of woranswer, Elijah proceeded to this challenge: "If you choose to be certainly assured nothing of the matter. which worship is the right, here do I stand, a single prophet on the one side, to defend the cause against the four hundred on the other. I will take an ox and lay it upon a pile of wood, without putting any fire to it; let them do the same thing, and call upon their gods to set their pile in a flame; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be worshipped as such. By this means you will be able to distinguish the true from the false."

The people were well pleased with the experiment proposed; and Elijah bade Ahab's prophets take an ox, and call upon their gods by their names, giving them the precedency in offering up the sacrifice. When they had called a long time upon their gods, and leaped upon the altar,* without any effect, Elijah turned their superstition to ridicule, and bade them cry out louder, intimating that their gods might possibly be upon a journey, or asleep.+ Thus stimulated, they continu-

ments; or if you are rather of opinion for 'ed their outeries and exclamations, from shipping, but their senseless idol knew

> secretum abiit, ut ventrem ibi exoneret; "Perhaps he is gone to the ---." This certainly reduces Baal to the lowest degree of contempt, and with it the ridicule and sarcasm are complete. The heathen deities had all of them certain employments assigned them, - one had the management of the winds, another of the water, the cares of which were supposed necessarily to occupy and distract their minds at particular periods; and some were also engaged in long and distant expeditions, from which they had to return before they could answer the supplications of their votaries. Even in the present day, the same notions prevail among the heathen, of the limited powers of the deities. Thus Siva, the principal god of the Hindoos, once fell into a profound reverie, which was supposed to be the cause of great public calamities and portentous occurrences that befell the land. On a particular season of the year, he is constantly oc-cupied with the pleasures of the chase, to gratify him with which, his statue, together with that of his favourite wife, is taken from his temple, placed on a car, and carried out to the open fields. Sometimes he suddenly departs on long journeys, and sometimes he falls asleep, which he did on one occasion particularly, when he had assumed the form of a porter, and, wearied with his task, resigned hims of under a tree to the influence of oblivious rest.—Clarke and Jamieson.
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> ‡ A strange method, one would think, to ob-

> tain the favour of their gods! And yet, if we look into antiquity, we shall find, that nothing was more common in the religious rites of several nations, than this barbarous custom. purpose we may observe, that the priests of Bellona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, were wont to besmear the victim with their own blood; that the Persian Magi used to appease tempests, and allay the winds, by making incisions in their flesh; that they, who carried about the Syrian goddess, among other mad pranks, were, every now and then, cutting and slashing them-selves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and that even to this day, some modern travellers tell us, that in Turkey, Persia, and several parts of the Indies, there are a kind of fanatics, who think they do a very meritorious thing, and what is highly acceptable to the deity, in cutting and mangling their own flesh .- Among the New Zealanders, who are perhaps the rudest people on the face of the earth, there is established the strange custom of tatooing, or burning their faces and other parts of their bodies with every atrocity of devices in honour of their gods-and among the Hindoos, who possess the most perfect and gigantic system of heathen worship that the world has ever seen, to brand themselves with the marks of their respective deities, is a practice not only common but held in the highest veneration; for before any one is admitted to the privilege of entering a tem-

others mentioned in this place.—Clarke.
† Rab. S. Jarchi gives this the most degrading meaning; I will give it in Latin, because it is too coarse to be put in English: Fortussis ad locum

^{*} They danced round it with strange and hideous cries and gesticulations, tossing their heads to and fro, with a great variety of bodily contortions. A heathen priest, a high-priest of Budhoo, showed to me the manner in which they dance and jump up and down, and from side to side, twisting their bodies in all manner of ways, when making their offerings to their demon gods; a person all the while beating furiously on a tom-tom, or drum, to excite and sustain those frantic attitudes; at the same time imploring the succour of their god, frequently in some such language as this: "O loving brother devil, hear me, and receive my offering!" To perform these sacrificial attitudes they have persons who are taught to practise them from their earliest years, according to directions laid down in religious books; and to make the joints and body pliant, much anointing of the parts and mechanical management are used; and they have masters, whose business it is to teach these attitudes and contortions according to the rules laid down in those books. It seems therefore that this was a very general practice of idolatry, as indeed are the

But when it came to the other's turn to sacrifice, and these fanatical priests were ordered to retire, Elijah desired the multitude to draw near, and examine everywhere if they could find any fire that was secretly conveyed for the execution of his proposal. Upon their approach Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, and repaired the altar of the Lord,* and cut a deep ditch about it. The wood was prepared, and laid upon the altar; the sacrifice upon the pile, and four vessels of spring water cast upon the altar; so that it ran off, and filled the trenches.†

ple, he must receive on his forehead an impression, which varies in form, and also in the colour with which it is distinguished according as the temple happens to be that of Vishnu or Siva, the grand objects of their superstition—and besides these important incisions, which he wears on his forehead, every Hindoo has also many others, amounting frequently to upwards of a hundred, on the arms, hands, and other parts of the body, and which vary in size and form according to the rank or fervour of the devotee.—Calmet, Le Clerc, and Jamieson.

* The altar, which the sacred author here calls the altar of the Lord,' was certainly one of those which were built in the time of the judges, and first kings of Israel; when, for want of a fixed place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus, lib. ii. c. 74. and Suetonius speak of the God of Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult, when he was at Judea. His priest Basilides promised him all manner of prosperity and success in his undertakings; but, as the two historians tell us, there was neither temple nor statue upon this mountain but one altar only, plain but very venerable for its antiquity. Some are of opinion that this Basilides was a Jew, and priest of the most high God; but it seems more reasonable, that he was a Pagan priest, and probably the same who met Vespasian in the temple of Serapis in Egypt. However this be, the altar of Carmel seems to have had its original from this altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterwards repaired; which even the heathens held in such veneration, that when they came to be masters of the country, they would not place so much as an image by it. - Calmet's Commentary.

† This was done to prevent any kind of suspicion that there was fire concealed under the altar. An ancient writer under the name of Chrysostom, quoted by Calmet, says that he had seen under the altars of the heathens holes dug in the earth with funnels proceeding from them, and communicating with openings on the tops of the altars. In the former the priests concealed fire, which, communicating through the funnels with the holes, set fire to

When every thing was ready the prophet Elijah called upon God, and besought him to show his power now for the conviction of a mistaken and unbelieving people. While the words were yet between his lips, there fell a fire from heaven, upon the altar, in the sight of the people, and consumed the sacrifice, and dried up all the water about the altar, and in the ditch.

The Israelites, upon this prodigy, fell prostrate upon the ground, and agreed in the adoration of one Lord; confessing him to be the great and only true God, and that the rest were only the vain imaginations of weak men.

The four hundred prophets were taken, and put to death by the command of Elijah, who then bade the king go and take refreshment, for that rain would soon fall in abundance, without troubling himself any farther.

When the king was gone, Elijah went up to the top of mount Carmel,‡ where

the wood and consumed the sacrifice; and thus the simple people were led to believe that the sacrifice was consumed by a miraculous fire, Elijah showed that no such knavery could be practised in the present case. Had there been a concealed fire under the altar, as in the case mentioned above, the water that was thrown on the altar must have extinguished it most effectually. This very precaution has for ever put this miracle beyond the reach of suspicion.—Dr A. Clarke.

‡ Mount Carmel is situated about ten miles to the south of Acre or Ptolemais, on the shore of the Mediterranean sea: it is a range of hills extending six or eight miles nearly north and south, coming from the plain of Esdraelon, and ending in the promontory or cape which forms the bay of Accho or Acre. It is very rocky, and is composed of a whitish stone, with flints imbedded in it. On the east is a fine plain watered by the river Kishon; and on the west a narrower plain de-scending to the sea. Its greatest height does not exceed fifteen hundred feet. The summits of this mountain are said to abound with oaks, pines, and other trees; and, among brambles, wild vines and olive trees are still to be found, proving that industry had formerly been employed on this ungrateful soil: nor is there any deficiency of fountains and rivulets, so grateful to the inhabitants of the East. There are many caves in this mountainous range, particularly on the western side, the largest of which, called the school of Elijah, is much venerated both by Mohammedans and Jews. On the summit, facing the sea, tradition says, that the prophet stood when he prayed for rain, and

he sat down upon the ground, and laying his head upon his knees, ordered his servant to go up to a rock toward the sea, and look about him if he could see a cloud. He went up again and again, but still saw nothing; at last, after the seventh time, looking about him, he said he saw something blackish in the air, about the size of a man's hand.* As soon as the prophet heard that, he sent away immediately to Ahab, to hasten to the city, lest he should be taken in a very great shower. The king took his advice, and the prophet, having girded up his vest, ran before him; + and by the time he was

beheld the cloud arise out of the sea: and on the side next the sea is a cave, to which some commentators have supposed that the prophet Elijah desired Ahab to bring Baal's prophets, when celestial fire descended on his sacrifice. Carmel appears to have been the name, not of the hill only distinguished as Mount Carmel, on the top of which the faithful prophet Elijah offered sacrifice, but also of the whole district, which afforded the richest pasture: and shepherds with their flocks are to be seen on its long grassy slopes, which at present afford as rich a pasture ground, as in the days when Nabal fed his numerous herds on Carmel. This was the excellency of Carmel which Isaiah opposes to the barren desert. It is mentioned by Amos as the habitation of the shep-The expression, forest of his Carmel, implies that it abounded at one time with wood: but its remoteness, as the border country of Palestine, and the wilderness characteristic of pastoral highlands, rather than its loftiness or its inaccessibility, must be alluded to by the prophet Amos (1x. 2, 3.) - Horne.

* In Abyssinia the morning is often clear, and the sun shines; about nine, a small cloud appears in the East, whirling violently round, as if upon an axis; when arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, and extends itself greatly, and seems to collect vapours from all opposite quarters. These clouds, having attained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence, and put me always in mind of Elijah's foretelling rain on mount Carmel; violent rain, attended with thunder, soon follows.

-Bruce.

† In this country loose and long garments were in use; and therefore, when the people were minded to run, or to make any great expedition, their custom was to gird them round their waist; but why the prophet condescended to become, as it were, the king's running footman upon this occasion, was to show the world, that his extraordinary power, in working miracles, and the conquest he had thereby gained over his enemies, had not made him proud; and to satisfy the king of his readiness to do him all the honour imaginable;

come to the city of Jezreel, the whole air was dark and overcast, and there fell immediately a very heavy rain.

When the mighty wonders that Elijah had performed, and particularly his having caused her prophets to be slain, reached the ears of the haughty Jezebel, she sent him threatening messages, that his life should answer for theirs. Elijah, upon these menaces, fled to Beersheba, which is in the farthest part of Judea, and there leaving his servant, went further into the wilderness of Arabia Petræa, where he laid himself down, as a man weary of life, and thus called upon God: "Lord, I am not better than those that are gone before me; and I find no temptations left me to desire longer life."

Laying himself down under a tree, he there fell asleep; but he had not slept long before an angel awoke him; and upon raising himself, he found meat and drink set before him, upon which he fed heartily; and in the strength of that refreshment, he went forward to mount Horeb, the place where God delivered the law to Moses. There was a large convenient cave there, ‡ which he entered

that he was far from being his enemy, and only desired he would become the true worshipper of God .- In the East, it is always the practice of the grandees to be preceded by running footmen, whose duty it is to chaunt songs in honour of their master, or to repeat moral sentiments for his instruction; and in proportion to the rank and dignity of the man of state who is thus honoured, is the quality of the individuals who move in procession before him. In a progress made by a Persian monarch through his dominions he was always preceded by multitudes, who, on his approach to every town or village, were joined by the most respectable people of the place, proclaiming in loud and measured strains, the virtues and princely qualities of the monarch, his victories over his enemies, and the most important deeds he had done for the benefit of his country. According to the usual custom, Ahab might have been honoured in like manner by many hundreds of his principal subjects, who had no doubt mingled with the crowd that covered the mount of Carmel to witness the contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal .- Patrick and Jamieson.

† The cave or grotto, in which the prophet found shelter, is yet pointed out by tradition, the truth of which is confirmed by the appearance of the surrounding scenery. This cave is as deso-

into, with some thought of taking it up for his habitation. While he was there, the question was put to him, how he came to leave the city, and wander thus in the desert. He heard the voice distinctly, but whence it came he knew not. His answer was, that upon the killing of the false prophets, and preaching the doctrine to the people of only one God, and that God only to be worshipped, the queen for this crime threatened to have him put to death.

He was commanded after this, by the same voice, to quit the cavern the next day, and receive his instructions how to govern himself for the future.

The day following he came out from his retreat, and immediately there was a great earthquake; and after the earthquake, the appearance in the air of a blazing fire, which fire was followed with a little pause of silence; and after that, a still voice,* bidding him fear nothing, for his enemies should not prevail against him; and so commanded him back again, by the way of Damascus, and there to

anoint Hazael, king of Syria, and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, king over Israel; and to anoint Elisha also, of Abel-meholah, prophet in his room; for that God was resolved to root out all the wicked from the land, by the strokes of Divine justice; and those that escaped the sword of Jehu should fall by that of Hazael.

Elijah returned, according to his order, and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, ploughing,† with twelve yoke of oxen. He went to him, and, casting his mantle over him,‡ Elisha immediately began to pro-

late a place of refuge as the fancy can conceive:—
no brook or pool is nigh, to quench the burning
thirst; not a shrub grows on the soil, but sad and
useless precipices are on every side. Every part
of the way was strewed with broken fragments of
rocks.—Carne.

* Various are the speculations, which this appearance of the Divine Majesty hath suggested to interpreters. The generality of them have looked upon this as a figure of the gospel dispensation, which came not in such a terrible manner as the law did, with storms, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, (Exod. xix. 16.) but with great lenity and sweetness, wherein God speaks to us by his Son, who makes use of no other, but gentle arguments, and soft persuasions. But if we take this to be a symbolical admonition to Elijah, according to the circumstances he was then in, we may reasonably suppose, that herein God intended to show him, that though he had all the elements ready armed at his command to destroy idolaters, if he pleased to make use of them, yet he had rather attain his end by patience, and tenderness, and long-suffering, (signified by that small still voice, wherein the Deity exhibited himself,) and consequently, that the prophet should hereby be incited to imitate him, bridling that passionate zeal to which his natural complexion did but too much incline him .- Le Clerc's, Calmet's, and Patrick's Commentaries.

† So far was this from being any argument of his poverty, that it was in reality a token of his wealth and great riches: for he, who could keep twelve yoke of oxen at plough, was in this respect no inconsiderable man, and yet, (according to the manner of these early times,) he looked after his own business himself; for nothing was of greater esteem, not only among the Hebrews, but among the ancient Greeks and Romans likewise, than agriculture; and such persons as were of the best quality, were called **coroupy***, men 'who did their work themselves,' and left not the care of it to others. Elisha therefore was taken from the plough to be a prophet, in like manner, as among the Romans afterwards, some were taken from thence to be consuls and dictators.—**Patrich's Commentary**.

† The plough of Elisha was halted that he might receive the prophetic robe of his illustrious predecessor, a ceremony which has always been considered by Eastern people an indispensable part of the consecration to the sacred office. It is in this way that the Brahmins are still invested with the priestly character,-a yellow mantle being thrown across the shoulders, which is buckled round the waist with a sacred ribbon; and it is in this way too, that the Persian sooffees are appointed. The master, in the anticipation of death, selecting one of his favourite pupils, bequeathes his antiquated garment to the youth, who by that act is publicly recognised as successor, and looked upon as inheriting, along with the mantle, the virtues and powers of his venerable precursor. The Suffavean dynasty, who long occupied the throne of Persia, owed the origin of their family to the reputation which the founder of it enjoyed for sanctity. That person, who was universally regarded as a holy man, was succeeded by his grandson, Juneyd, who took up his mantle after the death of his grandsire, and a crowd of disciples flocked to him, as the heir of the talents and qualifications of his deceased relative. It was evidently owing to the prevalence of the same Asiatic sentiments among the Israelites, that the succession to the prophetic office was determined by the descent of his master's cloak afterwards upon Elisha; and so well was the action understood as conveying to the servant the spirit and authority of the master, that he was universally phesy, quitted his oxen, and followed him, only desiring to take leave of his father and mother before he departed.

This was granted him; and upon his return from his parents, he became thenceforward a disciple and companion of Elijah.

It happened that one Naboth of Jezreel had a vineyard near the palace of Ahab, which lay contiguous to the king's grounds, Ahab had a great desire to inclose this parcel of ground within his own gardens, and often solicited Naboth to have it, either in exchange for some equivalent in another place, or otherwise for a sum of money.

Naboth excused himself, by alleging, that it being his inheritance, and in so particular a manner the gift of Providence, he preferred it to any other the king could bestow upon him, and that on any terms he did not wish to part with it.*

This disappointment of his desire, on another man's estate, was as grievous to Ahab as if he had lost his own; insomuch that he fell melancholy upon it, refusing to bathe as he was accustomed to do, and neglecting his meals.

acknowledged as the successor of that eminent

prophet.-Jamieson.

Naboth was unwilling to part with it, not only because he might have acquired that fondness for the spot, which is naturally felt towards a place which one has done much to beautify and improve, but because it was his patrimony, and had long been in the possession of his family. Even according to our ideas, attachment to a property which has come through a long line of ancestors would operate strongly in preventing the proprie-tor from parting with it,—but this feeling exists in a much stronger degree in the breast of a native of the East; for there is scarcely a single tree in oriental gardens that is not associated with some pleasing recollections or traditions of the family; one having been planted at the birth of one of its members,-another having been watered, and trained by the hand of another member of it,-a third in memory of some great domestic event. Indeed, as parents in the East are in the habit of planting one or more fruit trees on the birth of every child,-so a large and well-cultivated garden is a sort of register of the various members-literally a roof-tree of the family ;-so that to part with a spot which is not only endeared with venerable associations, but contains an ocular history of the family, is almost to sever all connection with one's hereditary line, and would be felt as parting with life itself.

Jezebel, upon this change, became very solicitous and inquisitive to know the cause of so wonderful an alteration, that her husband should on a sudden leave off bathing as he used to do, and forsake his food; so that upon her importunity, he told her the story of Naboth, and how contemptuously he had behaved himself; informing her farther, in these words, "I gave him the most courteous words, and in truth treated him even below the majesty of a king; for which civility I was put off with a flat denial."

The queen, on the other side, bade him be of good cheer, and give himself no farther uneasiness upon that account, for she would undertake to effect the matter herself, and make Naboth severely suffer for the affront.

Upon this she wrote letters in Ahab's name to the elders and chief men of Jezreel, to this purpose: "That they should proclaim a fast,+ call an assembly, and assign Naboth, upon account of his extraction, a place among the principal men of the people; that they should have two witnesses ready, who should swear any thing, to give evidence against him, for speaking blasphemy against God and the king; t upon which testimony he

⁺ It was always a customary thing, upon the approach of any great calamity, or the apprehension of any national judgment, to proclaim a fast; and Jezebel ordered such a fast to be observed in Jezreel, the better to conceal her design against Naboth. For by this means she intimated to the Jezreelites, that they had some accursed thing among them, which was ready to draw down the vengeance of God upon their city; and that therefore it was their business to inquire into all those sins which provoked God to anger against them, and to purge them out effectually. As therefore these days of fasting were employed in punishing offenders, doing justice, and imploring God's pardon, they gave the elders of the city an occasion to convene an assembly, and the false witnesses a fair opportunity to accuse Naboth before them.-Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.

[‡] By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God, Lev. xxiv. 16. and by custom it was death to revile the king, Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences (as they were instructed) accused Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. There is this difference, however, to

queen's direction, and Naboth convicted, with the fact. sentenced, and stoned to death.* Jeze-Naboth's work was now done, and that he might take possession of the vineyard when he pleased, without putting himself to the expense of purchasing it.

Ahab was so overjoyed at what Jezebel told him, that the first thing he did was to take a journey to his new purchase But God sent Elijah to him in his wrath, to charge him with the murder of the owner of that vineyard, and the iniquity of his usurping the possession.

When Ahab saw the prophet coming toward him, he went to him with a volun-

be observed between these two crimes, that if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem, (as the Hebrew doctors tell us,) and his goods came to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed: and for this reason it was, that they accused Naboth of this crime likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab, by that means, get possession of his vineyard.-Patrick's

Commentary.

* The manner of compassing Naboth's destruction was detestable. It was by the corruption of a whole court of judicature, and by subornation of witnesses. And so all the magistrates of Jezreel, at the instigation of Ahab's wife, and to serve her wicked purposes, were drawn into the horrible guilt of wilful perjury and deliberate murder. It was one dismal circumstance in this tragedy, that it was acted under the mask of religion, and with high pretences to vindicate the honour of God. It was introduced with a fast, to implore the Divine assistance and direction in the great cause they were entering upon; and the first article in Naboth's accusation was, that he had blasphemed the great Majesty of heaven. What a mystery of iniquity is the heart of man, where such black villanies are hatched and wrapt up, and transacted under the specious colours of zeal and devotion! Hypocrisy is odious in the lowest of the human race, but much more in a king, who punishes with death the counterfeiting of his seal, and abusing of his image and superscription to any fraudulent purpose, as being highly dishonourable to him; and yet is not ashamed to counterfeit the great seal of heaven, and profane the most sacred things of God, to give authority to his infernal machinations .- Reading.

should stand convicted, and receive sen- tary confession, and a tender of any satistence to be stoned to death by the people." faction the prophet should require. This Every thing was done according to the he did to prevent the other's taxing him

Elijah told him, "That where the dogs bel instantly, upon the news of this suc- licked the blood of Naboth, they should cess, went to the king, and told him, that also lick the blood of Ahab + and Jezebel; and that his whole race should be rooted out for this flagitious cruelty, in taking away the life of an innocent man by calumny and subornation."

> These words of the prophet brought Ahab to the sense of a true and sincere repentance. He mortified himself in sackcloth and fasting, going bare-foot, and giving manifestation of a hearty sorrow for his sins; so that God sent the prophet once again to him with another message, to acquaint him, that in regard to his penitence and humiliation, the judgment denounced should not be executed in his days, but should come to pass in the days of his son.

CHAPTER VI.

The siege of Samaria by Benhadad. Slaughter of the Syrians .- Ahab dismisseth Benhadad. -Is reproved by a prophet.-Seduced by false prophets, and slain - Prediction concerning the dogs licking up his blood fulfilled. -Different characters and reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah.

During these transactions, relating to king Ahab, Benhadad, king of Syria and

⁺ There is a great dispute among the learned, as to the accomplishment of this prophecy. At first, it was no doubt intended to be literally fulfilled, but upon Ahab's repentance, (as we find below,) the punishment was transferred from him to his son Jehoram, in whom it was actually accomplished; for his 'dead body was cast into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite,' for the dogs to devour, 2 Kings ix. 25. Since Ahab's blood therefore was licked by dogs, not at Jezreel, but at Samaria, it seems necessary, that we should understand the Hebrew word, which our translation renders 'in the place where,' not as denoting the place, but the manner, in which the thing was done; and so the sense of the passage will be-that 'as dogs licked, or in like manner as dogs licked Naboth's blood, even so shall they lick thine, observe what I say, even thine,'-Poole's Annotations.

Damascus, levied a powerful army out of his whole kingdom; and being joined by two and thirty confederate kings, beyond the Euphrates, marched with this mighty armament against Ahab, who did not think it reasonable, upon so vast a disparity in number, to venture a battle in the field; but chose rather to draw his military men out of the open country into strong holds and fortified towns, and to keep themselves upon the defensive.

He made choice of Samaria for his capital, which he resolved to make good, especially as the place was well fortified by nature and art.

The Syrian brought his army before it, and began in form to make his attack, sending a herald to Ahab at the same time, for license to despatch ambassadors to him, with instructions to propose what he should demand.

So upon the king of Israel's permission to send ambassadors, they came, and told him that their king's command was, that his treasure, his wives, and his children, were at Benhadad's mercy; and that if he would acknowledge as much, and permit the other to take what he thought fit out of them, he would instantly quit the siege, and withdraw his army.

Ahab sent the ambassadors back, with this answer, that he himself, and all he had, was at their master's service.

The Syrian, after this demand and return, sent yet another embassy, which was, that upon sending his officers and servants to him next morning, they should have free liberty to search all his own lodgings, with the houses and apartments of all his relations and domestics, and to take away with them whatever they should deem worthy of their acceptance; and as for the remainder, Ahab might keep to himself.

This message was by no means disagreeable to Ahab, as it afforded him a very plausible pretence for calling a council, in order to debate on measures necessary to be pursued.

Accordingly, when the assembly was convened he thus addressed them: "I have had two proposals sent me from Benhadad; the former for an acknowledgement that myself, my wives, and children, are all at his mercy; and upon the terms of such a confession, he was to raise the siege. Now all this I yielded to, as I would part with any thing of my own interest for the sake of the public peace, and the common good of my people; but they are now come to insist upon a general surrender, out of a mere captious humour, to pick a quarrel with us. They began at first with my own particular concerns, out of an opinion that self-partiality. would cause me to hesitate on that point. But I am now to deliver up my country and my people, which they know I will, never do. Therefore there must be a war. I am ready and resolved to act solely according to your counsel and approbation."

The council vehemently exclaimed against the insolence of this barbarian, and gave their voices unanimously for a war; so that the ambassadors were sent away with this answer, "That the king would yet agree to their first demands; but that, for the security and honour of the citizens, he would never consent to the latter."

Benhadad was so enraged at this answer, that he sent a third embassy which, was much more peremptory and menacing than the former: "Tell the king, that he values himself upon the strength and security of his walls; but before he is aware, I will cast up works that shall surmount them; and that will be but every soldier a handful of earth to do this business;" intimating thereby the incredible number of his people. To this Ahab replied, "That men of honour were to dispute with their swords, not with their tongues."

Benhadad happened to be at supper, with his two and thirty confederate kings, upon the ambassador's arrival with this answer; and he gave orders the same:

moment for the siege, and for prosecuting every measure that might conduce to the taking of the town.

Ahab and his party in the mean time were dispirited and hopeless, till a certain prophet came to him, and dispersed his fears with an assurance from God that he should prevail against that mighty army. Ahab was desirous to know by what hands this victory should be obtained. The prophet on inquiry, answered, "By the sons of the nobility, and yourself at the head of them, to conduct them, and give your orders." So the king then called them together to the number of two hundred and thirty-two; and Ahab having information that the Syrian was in the height of his cups and luxury, the gates were thrown open of a sudden, and these young heroes made a sally. The information of this was no sooner brought to Benhadad than he forthwith sent out a party toward them with orders, that whether they came to fight or to treat, they should bring them bound to him.

Ahab, in the mean time, had the rest of his army in readiness within the walls to issue out upon occasion. These great officers' sons first engaged with the guards, killed a great many of them, and pursued the rest up to their tents. When the king of Israel found that they succeeded thus far so well, he issued out with the remainder of the army, and furiously charging the Syrians, took them at unawares, and routed them without any difficulty, having only drunken men unarmed to encounter; so that they were forced to flee for their lives, Benhadad himself escaping with difficulty, by the swiftness of his horse.

They pursued them a great way, slaying all whom they overtook; and then with a rich booty of gold, silver, and equipages that they took in the tents, and the very chariots and horses of Benhadad, they marched back again to the city.

The prophet, however, advised the king, after all this, to have an army in

readiness to take the field next spring; for Benhadad would give occasion for it. So Ahab prepared vigorously for it on the one hand, and Benhadad called his friends together on the other, with the remainder of his broken army, to advise how to proceed.

Benhadad's friends were against his fighting any more in the mountains; for the Israelites' God, said they, was the God of the mountains; but if they had fought upon the plains, the Israelites would have been worsted. They also advised him to discharge the confederate princes from any further personal service and attendance, but to retain their troops and supply them with good officers; and in the mean time, their commanders might be levying recruits of horse and foot to fill up their broken companies. The king was well pleased with this advice, and applied himself to put it into execution.

In the beginning of the spring, he marched his army against the Israelites, and pitched his camp in a large plain, not far from the city of Aphek.† Ahab, in

Homer, and what Virgil has not forgot to imitate.

† Aphek, or Aphaca, as it is called by profane authors, was situated in Libanus, upon the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos; and, in all probability, is the same that Paul Lucas, in his 'Voyage du Levant.' speaks of, as swallowed up in a lake of mount Libanus, about nine miles in circumference, wherein there are several houses,

^{*} That there were many gods who had each their particular charge and jurisdiction; that some presided over whole countries, whilst others had but particular places under their tuition and government; and were some of them gods of the woods, others of the rivers, and others of the mountains, was plainly the doctrine of all heathen nations. Pan was reckoned the god of the mountains, and in like manner, the Syrians might have a conceit that the God of Israel was a god of the mountains, because Canaan, they saw, was a mountainous land; the Israelites, they perceived, delighted to sacrifice on high places; their law, they might have heard, was given on the top of a mountain; their temple stood upon a famous eminence, as did Samaria, where they had so lately received a signal defeat. For their farther notion was, that the gods of the mountains had a power to inject a panic fear into an army whenever they pleased. Nay, that they did not only assist with their influence, but actually engage themselves in battle, in behalf of their favourites, is a sentiment as old as Homer, and what Virgil has not forgot to imitate.

the mean time, advanced with his troops, and drew up over-against him, though by many thousands inferior to the number of

the Syrians.

While the armies were drawn up opposite each other, the prophet came to the Israelites, with an assurance from God that they should be victorious, and that their enemies should find the God of the mountains to be the God of the valleys

The armies continued for six days in the same station, without moving; and upon the seventh day they advanced on both sides in a line, and joined battle. It was maintained with great obstinacy at the first onset, but when the Syrians found that they were not able to stand the shock any longer, they turned their back, and betook themselves to flight, with the Israelites close at their heels.

Betwixt those that were slain in the pursuit, and those that perished in the confusion of their flight, by their own chariots and by one another, some being torn to pieces, and others trampled to death, the overthrow was very great.

Those that got into Aphek, the only place they had to fly to, were not many, considering so mighty a body of men; and of them about seven and twenty thousand were buried under the ruins of the walls,* besides a hundred thousand that were slain in battle.

all entire to be seen under water. The soil about this place (as the ancients tell us) was very bituminous, which seems to confirm their opinion, who think, that subterraneous fires consumed the solid substance of the earth, whereon the city stood, so that it subsided and sunk at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place .- Calmet's

Commentary.

* We are not to suppose, that this wall, or castle, or fort, (as it may be rendered) fell upon every individual, much less that it killed every man it fell on: it is sufficient to justify the expression, that it fell upon the main body of these seven and twenty thousand, and that it killed some, and maimed others, (for the scripture does not say that it killed all,) as is usual in such cases. Let us suppose then, that these Syrians, after their defeat from the plains of Aphek, betook themselves to this fenced city, and, despairing of any quarter, mounted the walls, or retired into other instances, Thevenot mentions, that, when themselves to this fenced city, and, despairing of

Renhadad, with some of his trusty officers and servants, got into a cave, and hid himself, where some of those about him extolled the natural humanity and goodnature of the Israelites, and advised their master to cast himself at Ahab's feet for mercy, confident that, upon such an application and submission, it would not be refused him.

The king consented to try the experiment; and thereupon a certain number of his train were immediately dressed up in the habit of suppliants and captives, clothed in sackcloth, with halters about their necks,+ according to the custom of

some castle, with a resolution to defend themselves to the last; and that the Israelitish army, coming upon them, plied the walls, or the castle, on every side, so warmly with their batteries, that down they came at once, and killing some, wounding others, and making the rest disperse for fear, did all the execution that the text intends. Thus we may account for this event in a natural way; but it is more reasonable to think, that God, upon this occasion, wrought a miracle; and, either by some sudden earthquake, or some violent storm of wind, overturned these walls, or this fortress, upon the Syrians. And indeed, if any time was proper for his almighty arm to interpose, it was at such a time as this, when these blasphemous people had denied his sovereign power and authority in the government of the world, and thereby, in some measure, obliged him, in vindication of his own honour, to give them a full demonstration of it, and to show, that he was the God of the plains as well as of the mountains; that he could as effectually destroy them in strong-holds, as in the open field, and make the very walls, wherein they trusted for defence, the instruments of their ruin. -Stackhouse.

† These appear such unusual and profound tokens of humility, that we are led to inquire into the cause of so extraordinary means being resorted to, to propitiate the conqueror; and the slightest review of the sacred narrative will show, that the very abject condition which the Syrian prince and his nobles assumed, was intended as an acknowledgment, not only of their submission to the king of Israel as their liege lord, but of sorrow and contrition for the insult they had offered to Israel's God, and which they considered as the cause of the irretrievable ruin into which they had fallen. That such was the real object of the extraordinary tokens of humiliation, which Benhadad and his followers displayed, is abundantly evident, not only from the tenor of the sacred story, but from many instances that occur in the history of the East, of persons being forced to acknowledge their offences, and coming to implore forgiveness in the the country in such cases, and sent to Ahab, with a commission to tell him that Benhadad was his servant, and would ever own himself so to be; and that they came in his name to implore his grace toward him for the saving of his life.

Ahab replied, "I am glad he is safe;

Bagdad was besieged by the Turks in 1638, the governor of the city went to the grand vizier with a scarf about his neck, and his sword wreathed in it, as a mark of submission, begging pardon and mercy. An example of the same kind is mentioned by Sir John Malcolm, as having occurred in the modern history of Persia. Abdalla, great governor of Ammadabat, had, by his insolent and disloyal behaviour, given the greatest provocation to the king. Being at last, however, persuaded to submit, he appeared in the royal presence, with a sword swung from his neck, with chains at his heels, and barefoot. "The whole of which de-meanour," says the historian, "is a mode of begging clemency the most humble, and is considered. by proud and barbarous men, the most ignominious. It signifies, I approach you as a criminal, and bring myself to submit to whatever terms you may impose." In the ancient history of Egypt, a remarkable instance is afforded, on occasion of the horrible and perfidious murder of a herald, sent to the people of that country by Cambyses, to whom they were tributary. The Persian monarch, determined on ample revenge, laid siege to Memphis
-took it-and seized on Psammeticus, the king of Egypt, and the principal of his nobility, who were reserved to act a part in one of the most doleful tragedies that was ever performed. First of all, the king, habited in the meanest attire, was placed in a conspicuous place to witness the spectacle. One of the Egyptian princesses, his daughter, was then led forth in the dress of a slave, with a pitcher to fetch water from the river, followed by the daughters of all the principal families in Egypt in the same wretched garb, and with pit-chers in their hands; after them were brought forth the young prince with 2000 of the Egyptian nobility, all with bridles in their mouths, and halters about their necks, led to execution, to expiate the blood of the Persian envoy; and, last of all, Psammeticus himself, with the same ensigns of degradation, his head bound with ropes, his sword suspended from his neck, closed the melancholy procession. In this instance the sad tokens of humiliation were imposed on the criminals by the justly offended Cambyses, but it shows the ceremony in its true light; it affords a clear proof, that in voluntarily assuming those symbols of submission, the fallen Syrians were complying with what the customs of the East have made the appropriate signs of humility and penitence, and they seem to have entertained the hope, that by their suppliant tone and attitude, they would not only secure a mild treatment from the conqueror, but also propitiate the powerful Deity, of whose wrath they regarded all their mortifying defeats, as the real and appalling effects .- Jamieson.

Ahab, with a commission to tell him that has welcome to me as if he was my own Bonhadad was his servant, and would ever brother."

The messengers, upon the solemnity of a sacred oath, that no violence should be offered to his person, went away to their master, and brought him out to the king of Israel, who was at that time in his chariot. As soon as the prisoner had made his obeisance, Ahab bowed himself to receive him, taking him up to him with his right hand, and kissing him, giving him his faith, and also his honour, for his absolute security and freedom.

Benhadad, on the other side, returned large acknowledgments, with repeated protestations, that his generosity and goodness should never be forgotten; and in the mean time, he would restore again to the Israelites all the cities and lands that had been taken from them, and that Ahab should be as free at Damascus, as ever the other's father had been at Samaria.*

^{*} The privilege which Benhadad gave to Ahab is thus expressed; 'Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus as my father made in Samaria.' This extraordinary privilege of making streets in Damascus, has exceedingly puzzled commentators. Some of them suppose the word houtsoth signifies market-places, where commodities were sold, the duties on which should belong to Ahab; others imagine he meant courts of justice, where the king of Israel should have the prerogative of sitting in judgment, and exercising a jurisdiction over the Syrians; others think they were a sort of piazzas, of which he should receive the rents; one class of interpreters understand by the word fortifications or citadels; another class attempt to prove, that palaces are meant, which Ahab should be permitted to build as a proof of his superiority. The privileges, which we know from the faithful page of history were actually granted to the Venetians for their aid, by the states of the kingdom of Jerusalem, during the captivity of Baldwin II. may perhaps explain in a more satisfactory ma .ner these words of Benhadad. The instrument by which these privileges were secured, is pre-served in the history of William, bishop of Tyre, the historian of the croisades, from which it appears, they were accustomed to assign churches, and to give streets in their towns and cities, with very ample prerogatives in these streets, to the foreign nations who lent them the most effectual assistance. The Venetians had a street in Acre, with full jurisdiction in it; and in what this consisted, we learn from the deed of settlement just

Upon this they proceeded to the signing and sealing of a league, and the reciprocal interchange of oaths, for the performance of covenants; and Benhadad was dismissed, not without magnificent presents.

After this victory over the Syrians, a certain prophet, whose name was Micaiah, came to an Israelite, and bade him strike him on the head; telling him at the same time that it was God's will to have it so; but the man refusing to do it, the prophet told him he should pay dear for his disobedience; for he should be devoured by a lion.

This accordingly happened; and the prophet, with the same words, went afterwards to another, who immediately smote him on the head, and wounded him Upon this, he bound up his head, and went to the king with this story, that he was a soldier, and a certain officer had delivered him a prisoner to keep, who had made his escape, and he himself was now

mentioned; they had a right to have in their street an oven, a mill, a bath, weights and measures for wine, oil and honey; they had also a right to judge causes among themselves, together with as great a jurisdiction over all those who dwelt in their street of what nation soever they might be, as the kings of Jerusalem had over others. The same historian informs us, that the Genoese also had a street in that city, with full jurisdiction in it, and a church as a reward for their services, together with a third part of the dues of the port. In the treaty of peace granted by Bajazet, emperor of the Turks, to Emanuel the Greek emperor, it was stipulated, that the latter should grant free liberty to the Turks to dwell together, in one street of Constantinople, with the free exercise of their own religion and laws, under a judge of their own nation. This humiliating condition the Greek emperor was obliged to accept; and a great number of Turks, with their families, were sent out of Bithynia to dwell in Constantinople, where a mosque was built for their accommodation. It is not improbable, that the same kind of privileges that were granted to the Venetians, the Genoese, and the Turks, had been granted to the father of Benhadad, by the king of Israel, and were now offered to Ahab in Damascus, in the distressed state of his affairs. The Syrian monarch promised to give his conqueror a number of streets in his capital city, for the use of his subjects, with peculiar rights and privileges, which enabled him to exercise the same jurisdiction there as in his own dominions .- Pazton.

Upon this they proceeded to the signg and sealing of a league, and the reprocal interchange of oaths, for the per-

> "Well," says Ahab, "and he would serve you but justly." Upon which words the prophet unbound his head, to give Ahab to understand, that he that told him this story was Micaiah.*

> He made use of this artifice to fasten the deeper impression on him; informing him in the end, that God would call him to a severe account for permitting the impious and blasphemous Benhadad to go, when he had him in his power; and assuring him, that the time would come, when this very man, that he had now spared, should be the death of himself. and the destruction of his army. Ahab was so incensed at this prophet's faithful discharge of his commission from the Lord, that he ordered him to be imprisoned. However, the prediction was attended with terrible apprehensions, and caused him to return home in a state of despondency.

> During these transactions relative to the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, king of Jerusalem, a prince of a very different turn of mind from that of the former, had not only fortified with garrisons all the places under his dominions, but likewise those in the land of Ephraim, that his grandfather Abijah had taken from Jeroboam, the king of the ten tribes. The king never failed of God's blessing and protection, in any of his undertakings, for he was a just and pious man, and not

^{*} It is here remarkable, that this prophet, whose severe denunciation of a disobedient person's slaughter by a lion had lately come to pass, was no other than Micaiah, the son of Imlah, who, as he now denounced God's judgment on disobedient Ahab, seems directly to have been that very propnet whom the same Ahab, in 1 Kings xxii. 8, 18., complains of 'as one whom he hated, because he did not prophecy good concerning him, but evil;' and who, in that chapter, openly repeats his denunciations against him; all which came to pass accordingly; nor is there any reason to doubt but this and the former were the very same prophet.— Whiston.

a day passed in which he neglected his duty to God or his people. The integrity of his life and manners gained him a high reputation among all the neighbouring kings, as appeared by the richness of their presents, which not a little contributed to the advancing his fortune, as well as his fame.

In the third year of his reign he called together the elders and the priests that were under his jurisdiction, and gave them orders to have commissioners sent from town to town, throughout the kingdom, to superintend the worship of God, and to see that the laws of Moses might be duly observed. This care for the preservation of their religion was so great a satisfaction to all his subjects, that there appeared a laudable emulation to excel in the promoting of so pious a design. The neighbouring princes also held him in such reverence, that they lived in a good understanding one with another, and preserved with him an inviolate peace. Philistines paid their ordinary tribute with punctuality, and the Arabians their annuity of lambs and kids.

Jehoshaphat also fortified his great towns, and kept in constant pay a well disciplined army, to be in readiness on every occasion. Of the tribe of Judah there were three hundred thousand under the command of Adnah, two hundred and eighty thousand under Jehohanan, and two hundred thousand under Amaziah; and of the tribe of Benjamin, two hundred thousand archers, under the command of Eliada. There was also another captain, whose name was Jehozabad, that commanded a hundred and eighty thousand men, armed with bucklers, beside the soldiers that were dispersed in towns and garrisons.*

Jehoshaphat married his son Jehoram to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, king of the ten tribes; and when he had occasion to go to Samaria, he was most magnificently entertained by Ahab, he and all his army, with corn, wine, flesh, and other provisions.

Upon Ahab's entreaty to join with him in a war upon the king of Syria, for the recovery of Ramoth-gilead, which had been taken, and was detained from him by that prince, Jehoshaphat, having an army of his own not inferior to the other, promised him his assistance, and sent for his troops from Jerusalem to Samaria, where both the kings went out of the town, and each sitting upon his throne, took a review of their forces, and gave their orders to their several armies.

Jehoshaphat, upon this occasion, was of

sidered, that the dominions of the kingdom of Judah under Jehoshaphat were not confined to the narrow limits of Judah and Benjamin only, but reached into the tribes of Dan, Ephraim, and Simeon; into Arabia, and the country of the Philistines; in a word, from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim one way, and from Jordan to the Mediterranean sea the other; when it is considered, that this kingdom received a vast accession when Jeroboam thrust out the priests and Levites from officiating in the service of the Lord, and multitudes of other piously disposed persons followed them from all parts of Israel, when they found that they might be encouraged in worship ping God at Jerusalem; when it is considered, that this country was exceedingly well cultivated, flourishing in commerce, abounding with foreigners, and what a vast increase of inhabitants in any nation may be produced in the space of an hundred years, which was the very period from David; and when it is considered farther, that soldiers in these days were not kept, like our standing armies, in constant pay and duty; but only had their names set down in the king's muster-rolls, in order to be summoned to arms whenever there was occasion, and so returned to their families, and followed their usual occupations: when all this is considered, and put together, I say, we shall not find the number of twelve hundred thousand fighting men (even though they may include six millions of persons of all ages and conditions) to be so very extravagant; especially, when it is remembered, that the city of Thebes alone (as it is reported by Tacitus) furnished no less than seven hundred thousand soldiers; that in ancient Rome, there were once between three and four millions of souls; and that, in Grand Cairo, (as some travellers report) there is an immense population .- Stackhouse.

^{*} Jehoshaphat had a more numerous people, and a larger military force, in proportion to his territories, than any of his most powerful predecessors. The whole amount of the particulars indeed is so very great, that some have suspected a mistake in the transcribers; but, when it is con-

opinion, if any of the prophets were at hand, to advise with them concerning this expedition against the Syrians, whether it were advisable to undertake a war at this time; for there had been three years' peace betwixt those two kings, since the Syrian was taken prisoner and set at liberty.

In consequence of the counsel of Jehoshaphat, Ahab called his prophets together, to the number of about four hundred, and ordered them to inquire whether they should be victorious in this war against Benhadad, and carry the city, which was the main point in question.

The prophets were unanimous for the war; declaring that the Syrian should be overcome, and made prisoner as before. Jehoshaphat, however, gave no credit to their assertions, but suspecting them to be false prophets, asked Ahab what other prophets there were, to whom he might have recourse. He informed him, that there was another indeed, one Micaiah, the son of Imlah, but he hated the man; for he had prophesied ill success to his affairs, and given out that he was to lose his life in this action against the king of Syria, so that he had now imprisoned him on that account.

But Jehoshaphat insisting that he should be consulted, a cunuch then in waiting was despatched to fetch him. This messenger told Micaiah, as they were upon the way together, what the rest of the prophets said, and how they all agreed that Ahab should be victorious. Micaiah honestly replied, "I must not prevaricate with him who made me; but by the grace of God, what message soever he shall think fit to put in my mouth, shall be most faithfully reported to the king."

Upon this prophet's arrival, Ahab adjured him to speak the very truth, without addition or diminution. Upon which the prophet thus declared: "I saw all Israel scattered and flying, and the Syrians pursuing them, as sheep that had no shepherd; by which representation God

hath given me to understand, that all the rest of the people shall return, and Ahab alone shall fall in the battle"

The king, upon these words, turning to Jehoshaphat, inquired if he was not convinced that this man was his enemy.

This occasioned the prophet to add farther, "The words that I deliver are according to the express direction and command of God; but you suffer yourself to be flattered by your false prophets into war, upon the hope of victory, when you yourself are to fall in it." This firmness and resolution of the prophet gave the king much concern.

One of the false prophets, whose name was Zedekiah, stood forth upon this occasion, and, in contempt of Micaiah, advised the king "not to give any heed to what that babbler said, as there was not a word of truth in it; and there needed no other proof of his being an impostor, than the prediction of Elijah, who undoubtedly saw further into things to come than he did; for he had foretold, 'That in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, (who was stoned to death by his command,) in the field of Naboth dogs should lick the king's blood also.' Now this is a most palpable falsity, in contradiction to the prediction of a prophet of much greater authority than himself; for he will have it, that within the compass of three days the king is to fall in the battle; but it shall be quickly seen, by what spirit this man speaks. I will strike him upon the ear, and let my hand wither in doing it, as Jeroboam's did upon lifting up his hand against Jadon, when he would have had the prophet taken into custody, if what he delivers to you be from heaven. I take it for granted, that you have heard of the circumstance."

Upon uttering these words he struck the prophet; and Ahab finding that no judgment immediately ensued, was hardened in his resolution upon this war, by a fatality that disposed him to give more credit to false prophets than to true ones, and produced causes that might be followed with suitable events.

Zedekiah then made him horns of iron, and declared, that under the figure of these horns was signified by God the pushing and the breaking of all Syria. Micaiah, on the other hand, told the false prophet, that in a very short time he should be called to an account for the vanity and falsity of his pretensions, and be driven from one hiding-place to another, to save himself.

Ahab was so exasperated that he appointed Amon, the governor of the city, to take him into close custody, and feed him with only bread and water till he should return.*

The dire event, foretold by the faithful Micaiah, now approaching, the two kings advanced with their troops toward Ramath, and the king of Syria hearing of it, went out to meet them.

It was agreed upon betwixt them, that Ahab should that day disguise himself in

* The keepers of the prison anciently had, as in the East they still have, a discretionary power to treat their prisoners just as they please; nothing further being required of them than to produce them when called for. According to the accurate and observant traveller, Chardin, the gaoler is master, to do as he pleases; to treat his prisoner well or ill; to put him in irons or not, to shut him up closely, or to hold him in easier restraint; to admit persons to him, or to suffer no one to see him. If the gaoler and his servants receive large fees, however base may be the character of the prisoner, he shall be lodged in the best part of the gaoler's own apartment; and, on the contrary, if the persons, who have caused the prisoner to be confined, make the gaoler greater presents, he will treat his victim with the utmost inhumanity. Chardin illustrates this statement by a narrative of the treatment received by a very great Armenian merchant. While he bribed the gaoler, the latter treated him with the greatest lenity; but afterwards, when the adverse party presented a considerable sum of money, first to the judge, and afterwards to the gaoler, the hapless Armenian first felt his privileges retrenched: he was next closely confined, and then was treated with such inhumanity, as not to be permitted to drink oftener than once in twenty-four hours, even during the hottest time in the summer. No person was allowed to approach him but the servants of the prison; at length he was thrown into a dungeon, where he was in a quarter of an hour brought to the point to which all this severe usage was designed to force him .- Horne.

a private habit, and the king of Jerusalem appear in his royal robes, the better to evade the fate predicted by the prophet. But the awful stroke reached the king, notwithstanding the artifice he employed to evade it; for Benhadad gave a strict charge to his officers and commanders to fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel.

The Syrians, upon the first push, seeing Jehoshaphat at the head of the army, immediately pressed upon him, taking him for Ahab, but when they found their error, they went off and left him. They kept the field from morning till night, the one flying, and the other pursuing, but not one drop of blood was spilled, the Syrians only hunting after Ahab, and still not finding him; but in the end, one of Benhadad's domestics shot an arrow at a venture, that struck the king through the joints of his armour to his very lungs.

Ahab was desirous to keep it concealed, for fear of discouraging his men; he therefore desired his charioteer to carry him a little distance from the army, for he was mortally wounded. He, however, kept his chariot till about sun-set, though in great pain and torment, and then, between his agony and weakness, with the loss of blood, he expired.

The night coming on, the Syrians withdrew to their tents; and as soon as they were informed by a herald of Ahab's death, the camp broke up, and every man departed to his own habitation.

The king's body was carried to Samaria, and there interred; and upon washing the blood off the chariot in a fountain near at hand, the prediction of Elijah was verified; for the dogs licked up the blood; and the place was afterwards made use of for common women to bathe in.

Thus died Ahab, king of Israel, by means of a divine appointment, in consequence of his deviation from strict obedience to the divine command; finding too late the folly and weakness of relying upon false and flattering prophets, in op-

position to the declaration of those commissioned from above. Anaziah nis son succeeded him in the government of Israel.

Upon Jehosnaphat's returning to Jerusalem, after his joining with Ahab against Benhadad, the prophet Jehu met him, and rebuked him, for espousing the quarrel of so impious and flagitious a man as Ahab. He told him how highly he had offended God by making that alliance; but yet that he was graciously pleased, as his heart was upright before him, to pass over what he had done amiss, and to deliver him out of the hands of his enemies.

Upon this admonition, the king turned himself to God by prayers and sacrifices, and appointed a general visitation through all his dominions, with orders for instructing the people in the laws of Moses, and in the religion of their forefathers.

He also appointed magistrates in all cities and great towns, giving them charge to administer justice to all men indifferently, to the poor as well as the rich, without any respect to profit, favour, or affection; and in fine, to discharge their duties as in the sight of the all-seeing God that knew the very thoughts of their hearts.

Having thus settled the administration of affairs, both civil and religious, in the several cities of the two tribes, he returned to Jerusalem, where he constituted judges from among the most considerable of the priests and Levites, enjoining them to do justice impartially; or if there should arise any controversies of more weight than ordinary, in any of their neighbouring cities, that should be brought to them for judgment, they should not pass sentence without all possible deliberation; for it would be most scandalous and dishonourable to neglect the strictest rules of justice in a city where God had established his temple, and the king his palace.

He chose the chief magistrates out of the number of his own friends; as Amariah the priest, and Zebadiah of the house of Judah.

At this time, the Moabites and Ammonites made war upon Jehoshaphat, assisted with a mighty army of auxiliary Arabians, and encamped at Engedi, a city near the lake of Asphaltites, about three hundred furlongs from Jerusalem, and famous for balsam and palm-trees.

When Jehoshaphat understood that they had passed the lake, and made inroads into his country, he was much alarmed, and immediately called an assembly of state; and, standing before the temple, he betook himself to prayer for God's blessing upon his arms against so powerful an enemy, which was according to the form and practice of his forefathers, upon the first erection of that holy place; who, whenever they found themselves in danger of being over-run by a foreign enemy, caused all the people to meet in full congregation, to implore God's assistance towards the repelling of that violence, and for the maintenance of that inheritance which the Lord, in his infinite bounty, had bestowed upon them, that their enemies sought to take away by force.

Jehoshaphat mingled his prayers with tears, and the whole multitude, with their wives and children, made their supplications also.

As they were in the fervour of their devotion, there started up a certain prophet in the midst of them, by name Jahaziel,* who declared to the people, that God had heard their prayers, and would fight their battle, in favour of the religion they professed; and warned them, upon this, to be in readiness next day to march towards their enemies, whom they should find encamped betwixt Jerusalem and Engedi, at a certain ascent, known by the

^{*} This person seems to have been immediately inspired by God on this occasion, (for we do not read of him as a prophet either before or after.) to comfort the people with an assurance of their deliverance: God himself hereby testifying how acceptable their pious king's devout address had been to him.

name of Ziz, (which in Hebrew signifies an eminence;) he also informed them farther, that they should not need to strike a stroke, but only stand looking on, as unconcerned spectators of an action wherein God would fight for them.

After this declaration, both the king and people fell prostrate upon their faces, gave thanks, and worshipped,—the Levites in the mean while accompanying their hymns with musical instruments.

The king, early next morning, went into the desert, under the city of Tekoa, where he admonished the multitude to put their trust in God, according to the prediction of the prophet, and that there was no need of ranging themselves in a form of battle, only to set the priests with their trumpets in the first line, and the Levites with their singers, and so move cheerfully forward with music and thanksgiving, as upon a day of victory, or deliverance from a common enemy.

They were all highly satisfied with the king's advice, and soon put it in execution; so God struck the Ammonites and their allies with such a panic and consternation, that they fell upon one another, and fought till not one of the army was left alive.

When Jehoshaphat came to take a view of the valley where the enemy was encamped, he found it covered with dead bodies. Never was victory gained more entire, or with such ease, insomuch that Jehoshaphat, in a transport of joy for so unexpected a blessing, gave his soldiers the pillage of the camp, and the spoil of the dead, which was so prodigious, that they were full three days in carrying off their booty.

On the fourth day, all the people gathered together in a certain valley, where they praised and biessed God for all the works of his power and mercy; from which circumstance the piace was called Beruchah, or 'the valley of plessing.'

The king then led his army thence to

Jerusalem, where he passed several days in sacrifice and feasting. The report of this miraculous victory filled all foreign princes and nations, wherever it came, with such reverence for Jehoshaphat, that they looked upon him as a person for whom God had a particular kindness, and retained the same opinion of him to the end of his days.

[Book V.

Nothing in the history of Jehoshaphat can more excite the wonder of the pious reader, than that a prince so eminent for strict obedience to the divine law, and the peculiar manifestations of the divine favour, should still be attached to the family and interest of Ahab's race, so far as to join with his son Ahaziah, both in war and traffic; for we find that they were jointly concerned in fitting out ships to trade between Tarshish and Ezion-geber.

But the design miscarried to their great expense and detriment; for the vessels were not adapted to those seas; so that, whether through ill conduct or foul weather, they were all cast away, and the project proved abortive, and was never after resumed.

Ahaziah, king of Israel, had his royal palace at Samaria. He was wicked and profane, and altogether adhered to the principles of his father and mother, and seemed to have had a certain emulation to out-sin Jeroboam himself, the capital seducer of Israel.

In the second year of his reign, the king of the Moabites revolted, and absolutely refused to be any longer subject to the tribute he had formerly paid to his father.

Ahaziah being in danger of his life, from a fall from off the battlements * into

^{*} In the Eastern countries, as before mentioned, the roofs of the houses were flat, and surrounded with a battlement to prevent falling from them, because it was a customary thing for people to walk upon them in order to take the air. Now, in this battlement we may suppose that there were some wooden lattices for people to look through, of equal height with the parapet-wall, and that Ahaziah negligently leaning on it, as it was rotten and infirm, it broke down, and let him fall into the

the court-yard of his palace, sent to inquire of Baalzebub,* the idol god of Ekron, concerning the event of the malady consequent on the fall.

court, or garden belonging to his house. Or there is another way whereby he might fall. In these flat roofs there was generally an opening, which served instead of a sky-light to the house below, and this opening might be done over with latticework, which the king, as he was carelessly walking, might chance to step upon, and slip through. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing such latticework in a king's palace, when the world was not arrived to that height of art and curiosity that we

find it in now.—Poole and Calmet.

* The word signifies, the god of flies; but how this idol came to obtain that name, it is not so easy a matter to discover. Several are of opinion, that this god was called Baal-semin, the lord of heaven, but that the Jews, by way of contempt, gave it the name of Baalzebub, or the lord of a fly, a god that was nothing worth, or, as others say, whose temple was filled with flies; whereas the temple of Jerusalem, notwithstanding all the sacrifices that were there daily offered, never once had a fly in it, as their doctors relate. The sacred writings, indeed, when they speak of the gods of the heathens, very frequently call them in general, idols, vanity, abominations, &c. but they never change their proper names into such as are of an opprobrious import; neither can we think it likely that the king of Israel would have called the god of Ekron, for whom he had so high a veneration as to consult him in his sickness, by any appellation of contempt. Whoever considers what troublesome and destructive creatures, especially in some hot countries, flies are known to be; in what vast swarms they sometimes settle, and not only devour all the fruits of the earth, but in many places occasion a noisome pestilence, may reasonably suppose that the heathens had a proper deity, to whom they made their addresses, either for the prevention or removal of this sore plague. And accordingly we are told by Pliny, that, when there was a plague in Africa, occasioned by vast quantities of flies, after that the people had sacrificed to the god Achore, he should have said, the god of Ekron, for there is a plain affinity between their names, the flies all died, and the distemper was extinguished. Now, it was a known maxim of the heathen theology, that, as all plagues were inflicted by some evil demon or other, so all evil demons were under the restraint of some superior one, who is their prince and ruler. As therefore Pluto was known to be the god of hell, and to have all the mischievous band of spirits under his control; to him the heathen used to pray, and offer sacrifices, that he might not suffer any of his inferior agents that he might not suffer any of his interior agents to inflict this heavy judgment upon them. They worshipped him, I say, not to engage him to do them any good, but to prevail with him to do them no harm; and accordingly we may observe, that every thing in their service was dark and gloomy. Their offerings were in the night, their victims were black, and the blood let out into a deep ditch. Such good reason have we to think deep ditch. Such good reason have we to think,

Upon this occasion the God of Israel commanded the prophet Elijah to go immediately, meet the messengers, and ask them, whether the Israelites had not a God of their own? And to remind them that there was no need of consulting a strange god in the case; and therefore they had best go back to the king, and tell him that he should not recover.

The messengers immediately took their errand from Elijah, and hasted with it to the king, who was surprised at their hasty return. They told him of a man they met, who bade them go no farther, but charged them to return and tell their king in the name of the God of the Israelites, that his illness was mortal.

The king was very earnest with them to describe the man; so they told him he was a hairy man, with a leathern girdle about him. By this description the king presently concluded this person to be Elijah, and despatched an officer with fifty soldiers to take him into custody.

The commander, finding him upon the top of a hill, called him down to go with him to the king, and informed him, that if he refused, he must use compulsive measures.

Elijah told him, that to show him the difference between a true prophet and a false one, he would now convince him by a prodigy, that he was no impostor. "If I am a man of God," says he, "let fire come down from heaven, and devour thee and thy fifty."

that the Baalzebub, in scripture called the 'prince of the devils,' was the very same with the Pluto whom the heathens made the god of hell, and worshipped in this manner.—Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries, and Jurieu Hist. des Dogmes et Cultes.

[†] Some have blamed the prophet for destroying these men, by bringing down fire from heaven upon them. But they do not consider that it was no more possible for Elijah to bring down fire from heaven than for them to do it. God alone could send the fire; and as he is just and good, he would not have destroyed these men had there not been a sufficient cause to justify the act. It was not to please Elijah, or to gratify any vindictive humour in him, that God thus acted; but to show

The prophet had no sooner put the authenticity of his predictions to this test, than a fire descended, and consumed them all. The tidings of this dreadful judgment no sooner reached the king's ear, than enraged he sent another officer, with the same number of men, and upon the same errand. The captain said the same things, used the same menaces, and they were all destroyed after the same manner. After this the king sent a third officer with his party.

This messenger being a person of a mild disposition, who seems to have maintained a due respect for the prophet of the Lord, addressed him in the following humble manner: "I need not tell you that I am under command: that I come upon this errand unwillingly, as they did likewise who came before me; wherefore I beseech you be pleased out of pity to me, and my soldiers about me, to come down willingly, and follow us to the king."

Elijah was so much moved with the modesty and humility of this officer, that he went down and followed him.* When they had brought him into the king's presence, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he freely addressed the king in these

his own power and justice. No entreaty of Elijah could have induced God to have performed an act that was wrong in itself. Elijah, personally, had no concern in the business; God led him simply to announce on these occasions what he himself had determined to do. 'If I be a man of God,' i. e., as surely as I am a man of God, 'fire shall come down from heaven, and shall consume thee and thy fifty.' This is the literal meaning of the original; and by it we see that Elijah's words were only declarative, and not imprecatory.-Dr A. Clarke.

* This is a great instance of the prophet's faith and obedience to God, in whom he trusted, that he would deliver him from the wrath of the king, and the malice of Jezebel. He had ordered, not long before, all the prophets of Baal to be slain; had sent a very unwelcome message to the king; and now made a very terrible execution upon two of his captains, and their companies; so that he had all the reason in the world to apprehend the utmost expressions of the king's displeasure: and yet, when God commands him, he makes no manner of hesitation, but goes boldly to him, and confirms with his own mouth the ungrateful truth which he had declared to his messengers .- Pa- reason, is as absurd as it is impious. trick's Commentary.

words: "Thus saith the Lord, Since you have an opinion of me that I am no God. nor able to foretell what will be the issue of your distemper; and that you have rather chosen to send to the god of the people of Ekron for your satisfaction, know for certain that it will be your death."

In some short time this prophecy was fulfilled, and Ahaziah dying without issue, Jehoram his brother succeeded to the sceptre of Israel. He was equal to Ahab in a vicious and irreligious course of life: for he delivered himself up wholly to strange gods, to the scandal and dishonour of the religion of his forefathers, though in other respects he had genius and capacity happily adapted to conduct the important business of state.

About the close of the reign of this prince, Elijah, that faithful servant and eminent prophet of the God of Israel, was translated from the earth to the regions of bliss and glory.

Whilst Elijah and Elisha were discoursing, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses, which separated them, and in a short time Elijah was caught in a whirlwind from the sight of Elisha into heaven.+

This wonderful exertion of Almighty power was displayed in the presence of Elisha, in order to strengthen his reliance on that God who had enabled him to perform divine miracles in confirmation of the truth of his prophetic mission.

Jehoram, now elevated to the throne of his brother Ahaziah, determined to make war upon Mesha, king of the Moabites, for refusing to pay the yearly tribute of two hundred thousand unshorn sheep, 1

⁺ The enemies of revelation have not failed to throw their impious scoffs on this part of sacred writ, as well as that which speaks of the translation of Enoch; because the precise manner of it is not recounted. But such would do well to remember, that many of the operations of Omnipo-tence are beyond the comprehension of finite beings, and that to scan the practicability of things, with respect to that Divine attribute, by human † This was a prodigious number indeed; but

which he had formerly paid to his father Ahab; wherefore he began with levying an army at home, and after that solicited the assistance of Jehoshaphat (upon the account of his having maintained an alliance with his father) to join him. Jehoshaphat not only promised for himself, but undertook likewise to engage the king of Edom, having some tie upon him, in the party.

When Jehoram came to understand how well he was to be supported, he went forthwith to Jerusalem, where he was splendidly received and entertained by the king. Being there in council, the method of the expedition was taken into debate, and it was unanimously agreed for the army to steer their course through the desert of Edom, * where the enemy would be least aware of the design. kings of Jerusalem, Israel, and Edom, therefore, put themselves upon their march, according to the resolution of the council; and when they had wandered up and down for the space of seven days, they were greatly distressed for want of water, for man and beast, insomuch that both

their men and cattle were upon the point of perishing. Jehoram thus impiously and presump-

tuously expostulated with God upon that awful occasion: "What have these three kings done, to be delivered up captives to the king of the Moabites, without the hazard of a battle?"

Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, as became a pious man, and according to his general practice, endeavoured to appease the vehemence of Jehoram, advising him to inquire if there were a prophet in the army to ask counsel of God what was to be done under their present circumstances. A servant within hearing told them that he had seen Elisha the son of Shaphat there, the disciple of Elisha; and upon this information, the three kings, at the persuasion of Jehoshaphat, went and found him out.

When they came to his tent, which was at a little distance from the camp, they asked him what would become of the army for want of water; but Jehoram being more importunate than the rest, the prophet addressing him, said, "You should have gone to your father's and mother's prophets for satisfaction, without troubling other people; they would have resolved you no doubt."

Jehoram importuned him still, entreating and begging for an answer, if it were but for saving the lives of so many men that were ready to perish. Elisha swore solemnly to Jehoram, that if it were not for the sake of Jehoshaphat, who was a good and a pious man, he should have had no answer from him.

Upon this he ordered a minstrel to be called, and as he was playing, the Spirit of God came upon the prophet, who spoke to the kings in this manner: "Thus saith the Lord, Make this place full of ditches, and you shall see them all flowing with water, without either wind or rain; water sufficient for yourselves and your cattle, to all manner of purposes. Beside this, God will bless you yet further, for

then we are to consider, that these countries abound with sheep, insomuch that Solomon offered an hundred and twenty thousand at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 5. and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarites two hundred and fifty thousand, 1 Chron. v. 7. For, as Bochart observes, their sheep frequently brought forth two at a time, and sometimes twice a year. The same author remarks, that in ancient times, when people's riches consisted in cattle, this was the only way of paying tribute. It is observed by others likewise, that this great number of cattle was not a tribute which the Moabites were obliged to pay to the Israelites every year, but on some special occasion only; upon the accession of every new king, for instance, when they were obliged to express their homage in this manner, or to make satisfaction for some damages, that the Israelites should at any time suffer from their invasions, or revolts .- Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

* Their nearest and most direct way to invade · Moab, which lay over Jordan, was through the tribe of Reubea, or the south part of the country beyond Jordan; but they fetched a compass through the wilderness of Edom, which probably lay on the southwest of the Salt sea, and so invaded Moab on those parts which were most dis-tant from Israel, and on which, in consequence, they least expected to be invaded -Dr Wells.

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by his grace and help you shall overcome your enemies, and scatter them, and ruin their fruit trees,* lay their country waste, and dam up all their fountains."

The day after the prophet had delivered this prediction, there came down from Edom, three days' journey from this place, an impetuous torrent upon a mighty fall of rain, so that there was no longer any want of drink, either for man or beast.

When the king of Moab understood that these three kings were advancing against him by the way of the wilderness, he mustered all his forces to meet them upon the borders, lest they might find an opportunity of falling on him by surprise. The two armies were by this time not far from the land of Moab, when the rising sun striking upon the torrent, made the water look so red, that the Moabites took it for blood, vainly imagining that the three kings had fallen upon one another in a rage for want of water, and that this torrent was a stream of their blood.

In this confidence they went to their king only for permission to rifle the enemy's camp, taking it for granted that it was abandoned. Upon their application they obtained leave to break in upon the enemy's baggage, and, confident of making a large booty, advanced without order, and in great haste towards the camp; but they soon reaped the fruits of their rashness and vain boasting; for being charged on all hands in the attempt, part of them were slain, and the rest so scattered, that with much difficulty they escaped with their lives.

The kings, in the mean time, made an incursion into the land of the Moabites, destroyed their towns and cities, drove away all their cattle, and covered all their fields with the gravel of the torrent; cut down the best of their trees, dammed up the springs and fountains, and levelled their walls to the ground; nay, the king himself was forced to take sanctuary in a town, where he was afterwards besieged; and in such danger was he of losing it by an assault, that he attempted a sally with seven hundred horse upon the enemy's weakest quarter, to break through their body; but failing in his attempt, he was forced into the town again, where he entered upon the most horrid and barbarous action that the uttermost distress or despair could bring a person to perpetrate.

Mesha took his eldest son, the next heir to the government, and sacrificed him to God upon the walls, in the view of the enemy's army.† The kings, reflecting.

^{*} This practice of cutting down, or plucking ap by the roots, the fruit-trees, was forbidden, even in ordinary wars, by the law of Moses, Deut. xx. 19, 20; and only allowed by God in this particular case, when the Moabites were to be punished and cut off in an extraordinary manner for their wickedness. See Jer. xlviii, 11, 12, 13, and many the like prophecies against them. Nothing could therefore justify this practice but a particular commission from God by his prophet, as in the present case, which was ever a sufficient warrant for breaking any such ritual or ceremonial law whatsoever.

⁺ We are assured, not only from scripture, but from the testimony of several heathen writers, that in cases of great extremity, it was customary to sacrifice to their gods whatever was dear to them. Cæsar, in his Commentaries, tells us, that when the Gauls were afflicted with any grievous diseases, or apprehensive of great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them, because, says he, "they imagined their gods could never be appeased, unless one man's life was given for another's." Grotius is of opinion, that this king of Moab, in imitation of Abraham, sacrificed his son to the God of Israel, hoping thereby to appease his wrath, and to move the compassion of the kings that were besieging him: and others have held that he offered this costly sacrifice to Chemosh, which was his national god, and generally thought to be the sun.—By thus sacrificing his son publicly, however, he appears to have rather contemplated the terrifying of his enemies than the appeasing of his god. In a communication from Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, the governor-general to the society at Calcutta, he mentions a custom of the Brahmins, of sitting at a person's door, with some implement of suicide in their hands, and threatening to kill themselves, unless that which they demand be granted to them: this, when their demand is not excessive, is usually complied with, through fear of their self-murder. After which his excellency relates the following history, as it appeared on a trial before the English court of justice. It will elucidate the otherwise unaccountable conduct of Mesha. "Beechuk and Adher were two Brahmins, and zemindars, or proprietors of landed

tion, together with the vicissitude of hu- the siege upon it, and departed. man affairs, and considering if it were their own case, were softened to such a

estates, the extent of which did not exceed eight The village in which they resided was the property of many other zemindars. A dispute which originated in a competition for the general superintendence of the revenue of the village, had long subsisted between the two brothers, and a person named Gowry. The officer of government, who had conferred this charge upon the latter, was intimidated into a revocation of it, (by the threats of the mother of Beechuk and Adher to swallow poison) as well as to a transfer of the management to the two Brahmins. By the same means of intimidation, he was deterred from investigating the complaint of Gowry, which had been referred to his inquiry by his superior authority. But the immediate cause which instigated these two Brahmins to murder their mother, was, an act of violence said to have been committed by the emissaries of Gowry, (with or without his authority, and employed by him to a different purpose,) in entering their house during their absence at night, and carrying off forty rupees, the property of Beechuk and Adher, from the apartments of their women. Beechuk first returned to his house; where his mother, his wife, and his sister-in-law related what had happened. He immediately conducted his mother to an adjacent rivulet, where being joined in the gray of the morning by his brother Adher, they called out aloud to the people of the village, that although they would overlook the assault as an act that could not be remedied, yet the forty rupees must be returned. To this exclamation no answer was received; nor is there any certainty that it was even heard by any person; nevertheless, Beechuk, without any further hesitation, drew his scymetar, and at one stroke severed his mother's head from her body; with the professed view, as entertained and avowed both by parent and son, that the mother's spirit, excited by the beating of a large drum during forty days, might for ever haunt, torment, and pursue to death, Gowry and the others concerned with him. The last words which the mother pronounced were, that she would blast the said Gowry, and those concerned with him.' The violence asserted to have been committed by the emissaries of Gowry in forcibly entering the female apartments of Beechuk and Adher, might be deemed an indignity of high provocation; but they appeared to have considered this outrage as of less importance than the loss of the money, which might, and would, have been recovered with due satisfaction by application to the court of justice at Benares. The act which they perpetrated had no other sanction than what was derived from the local prejudices of the place where they resided; it was a crime against their religion; and the two brothers themselves quoted an instance of a Brahmin, who six or seven years before had lost his caste, and all intercourse with the other Brahmins, for an act of the same nature. But in truth, Beechuk and Adher, although

upon the force of an abandoned despera- ; degree of compassion, that they broke up

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Jehoshaphat after this expedition reigned in peace, but did not long enjoy his crown; for he died at Jerusalem in the sixtieth year of his age, and in the twenty-fifth of his reign: and had in that city a most magnificent burial, as became the imitator of David, the renowned monarch of that state.

Brahmins, had no knowledge or education suitable to the high distinctions of their caste, of which they preserved the pride only; being as grossly ignorant and prejudiced as the meanest peasants in any part of the world. They seemed surprised when they heard the doom of forfeiture of caste pronounced against them by a learned Pundit, and they openly avowed that so far from conceiving they had committed a barbarous crime, both they and their mother considered this act as a vindication of their honour, not liable to any religious penalty." Sir John Shore gives two other instances of a like nature; one of which is, the murder of a daughter by a Brahmin who was provoked by an adversary. These instances are all of Brahmins; and probably are not general in India; but the idea connected with them appears to be of ancient date, and are similar to the action of the king of Moab, failing in his attempt to repulse his assailants. If these Brahmins thought they had such a right over the life of their mother, with her consent, might not the king of Moab think he had such a right over the life of his son? who perhaps was hero enough voluntarily to suffer it (like the son of Idomeneus, in Fenelon's Telemachus.) It is certain, that parental power extended even to the depriving a child of life among the Romans, the Gauls, the Persians, and other ancient nations. From whence, then, was the 'foaming rage' against Israel? no doubt from Moab, thus deprived of her prince: but, probably, also from Edom, q. d. "These Israelites, not having such customs among themselves, despise our institutions; they push this king to extremities, and call his behaviour superstitious, profane, impious; whereas we, being aware of this custom, and indeed respecting it, sympathize with the distressed king, and hate those who abominate what he is doing." Is not this a natural solution of the dif-ficulty, whence was this rage? and why, and wherefore Israel returned disgusted, as it should seem, into their own land? Did Edom also suppose itself to be haunted by the spirit of this sacritice, and feeling this terror flee to avoid it, at the same time cursing Israel who had brought it upon tuem? If this conjecture be applicable, the king of Moab did not merely by this sacrifice implore assistance from his gods; but he took this method of terrifying his adversaries, after his own personal valour had proved ineffectual to deliver himself and his country from them .- Le Clerc and Calmet.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

BOOK VI.

FROM THE DEATH OF JEHOSHAPHAT TO THE DEATH OF HEZEKIAH.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE history contained in this Book exhibits little else than a series of crimes, disasters, divine benefits and divine judg-The kingdom of Israel presents a long succession of tyrannical and profligate sovereigns, from Jehoram to Hoshea, in whose reign Samaria was captured by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, and the ten tribes taken captive into that country. In the kingdom of Judah we meet with some few pious princes, who promoted the interests of pure religion in the land, but the major part were wedded to idolatry. During this period numerous prophets flourished, as Elisha, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Hosea, Micah, &c. who lifted up their voices against the corruptions of the princes, and the profligacy of the people. The prophets, according to Augustine, were the philosophers; divines, instructors, and guides of the Hebrews in piety and virtue. These holy men were the bulwarks of religion against the impiety of princes, the wickedness of individuals, and every kind of immorality. Their lives, persons, and discourses were alike instructive and prophetical. Raised up by God to be witnesses of his presence, and living monuments of his will, the events that frequently happened to them were I

predictions of what was about to befall the Hebrew nation. Although the prophets possessed great authority in Israel, and were highly esteemed by pious sovereigns, who undertook no important affair without consulting them, yet their way of life was exceedingly laborious, and they were very poor, and greatly exposed to persecution and ill treatment. They generally lived retired in some country place, and in colleges or communities, where they and their disciples were employed in prayer, in manual labour, and in study. Their labour, however, was not such as required intense application, or was inconsistent with that freedom from secular cares which their office required. Thus, Elisha quitted his plough, when Elijah called him to the prophetic office; and Amos tells us that he 'was no prophet, neither a prophet's son, but a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit.' The pupils or sons of the prophets, who lived under the direction of Elijah and Elisha, erected their own dwellings, for which they cut down the timber that was re-Their poverty was conspicuous quisite. in their whole life. The presents they received were only bread, fruits, and honey; and the first fruits of the earth were given them, as being persons who possessed nothing themselves. Their re-

cluse, abstemious mode of living, and the war with the Moabites, and brought mean apparel, sometimes exposed them to contempt among the gay and courtly: it was, probably, the singular dress and appearance of Elisha which occasioned the impious scoffs of the young men at Bethel. But, in general, the prophets were regarded with high esteem and veneration by the wise and good, and even by persons of the first rank in the state. It does not appear that the prophets were bound by any vow of celibacy; for Samuel had children, and the scriptures mention the wives of Isaiah and Hosea. But the prophets maintained a very guarded intercourse with the female sex, as is evident in the conduct of Elisha towards his benevolent hostess. But, however they might be respected by pious monarchs, the prophets were frequently exposed to cruel treatment from wicked princes, whose impiety they reprehended, and to insults and jeers from the people, whose immoral practices they censured and condemned; and many of them were even put to violent deaths. Yet, amid all these persecutions and this injurious treatment, they despised dangers, torments, and death, and with wonderful intrepidity attacked whatever was contrary to the law and worship of Jehovah, contemning secular honours, riches, and favours, with astonishing disinterestedness.

CHAPTER I.

Various circumstances attesting the mission of the prophet Elisha.—Jehoram is besieged by Benhadad, who raises the siege, and is afterwards strangled by Hazael .- Flagrant impieties of Jehoram .- The prophet Elisha denounces dreadful judgments against that abandoned prince.

Good king Jehoshaphat was succeeded, according to his own appointment, by Jehoram his eldest son, who bore the same name with his mother's brother the king of Israel, and the son of Ahab. then but newly returned to Samaria from

Elisha with him.*

The prophet Elisha, having received notice of a conspiracy against the life of Jehoram, and that Benhadad had treacherously planted an ambush to surprise him, gave the king intelligence of it, with a caution to avoid a certain place, where the Syrians had laid a plot to insnare him. This precaution kept the king from going

* The holy scriptures make mention of several memorable passages of that prophet, which we shall account well worthy our notice of in this his-tory; amongst the rest is the following. The wife of Obadiah, Ahab's steward, applied herself to Elisha, and told him that he was no stranger to the outrageous violence of Jezebel against the prophets, and that her husband concealed and preserved a hundred of them from destruction, and took up money upon his own credit to feed them while they were in the cave; but that her husband being now dead, the creditors threatened to make slaves of her and her children for the debt; wherefore she entreated him for her husband's sake to procure her some present relief: upon this the prophet asked her what she had in the house. She replied, Only a little oil in a cruise. The prophet then bade her go borrow as many empty pots, or vessels, of her neighbours, as she could get, and keep her chamber door shut, and put oil into all those vessels; for God would fill them all. The widow did as she was ordered; and after the distributing of the oil, she came back again to the prophet, and gave him a particular account of what she had done; who advised her to sell the oil, and discharge the debts; for there would be somewhat remaining, after satisfaction given to the creditors, for the relief of her children. By this means she delivered herself from a troublesome obligation. -The Jewish law looked upon children as the proper goods of their parents, who had power to sell them for seven years, as their creditors had to compel them to do it in order to pay their debts; and from the Jews this custom was propagated to the Athenians, and from them to the Romans. The Romans, indeed, had the most absolute control over their children. By the decree of Romulus they could imprison, beat, kill, or sell them for slaves. But Numa Pompilius first moderated this, and the emperor Dioclesian made a law, that no free persons should be sold upon account of debt. The ancient Athenians had the like jurisdiction over their children, but Solon reformed this cruel custom: as indeed it seemed a little hard that the children of a poor man, who have no manner of inheritance left them, should be compelled into slavery, in order to pay their deceased father's debts: and yet this was the custom as appears from this passage, wherein the prophet does not pretend to reprove the creditor, but only puts the woman in a method to pay him .- Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

a hunting, and disappointed the plot. But Benhadad was so enraged when he found his malicious contrivance defeated, that he reviled his domestics as a set of traitors, threatening them with no less than death itself, for discovering a design that no other persons were privy to but themselves. One of his servants made answer, that he need not accuse his friends and domestics of treason, or suspect that any of the party he had sent to intercept the enemy had betrayed his counsels, while he had Elisha for a spy upon him, who was perpetually prying into his ways and actions on his master's behalf, and had the faculty of diving into the most secret of his designs.

The king immediately sent his scouts abroad to inquire after Elisha, and learn where he was; and in a short time word was brought him that he might be found at Dothan. Upon this intelligence he immediately despatched horsemen and chariots to apprehend him; who went and beset the town by night, so that there was no possibility of coming in or going out. Early the next morning, a servant of the prophet's ran trembling to his master, to acquaint him that the town was beset with a body of the enemy that were come to apprehend him; but Elisha bade him be courageous, nor fear even an army, and put his trust and confidence in the goodness and power of an over-ruling providence; and he prayed to God for some special token of his presence and protection, that might confirm his servant in a fearless resignation to his holy will and pleasure. The prophet's prayers were heard, and there appeared forthwith, in the sight of the servant, a multitude of horses and chariots round about Elisha, as a guard upon his person. The consideration of this succour, as the servant understood it to be, put him out of all fear of any further danger for his master.

After this vision the prophet prayed again that God would cast a mist before the eyes of these people, and strike them

with a blindness, that they might not discern him from another man. Upon the granting of this request also, Elisha cast himself into the middle of their troops, and, passing from one to another, inquired for what or for whom they sought.*

On their informing him that they sought for Elisha the prophet, he assured them, that if they would follow him, he would conduct them to the place where they might apprehend him.

Encouraged by this promise, they followed him without any scruple, till he brought them into Samaria.

Upon their entrance into the city, the prophet bade Jehoram cause the gates to be shut, and the Syrians to be surrounded.

Upon this occasion Elisha offered up a third prayer; which was, that God would restore the Syrians to their sight again: whereupon their eyes were opened, and to their great astonishment and admiration, they found themselves inclosed in an enemy's town, in the hands and entirely at the mercy of their adversaries.

^{*} We are not to imagine, that this blindness was so total, that they quite lost the use of their eyes, but only that it was such a dimness, and confusion in their sight, as hindered them from distinguishing one object from another, the city of Dothan, for instance, from the city of Samaria: even, in like manner as we read of the people of Sodom, that when the angels 'smote them with blindness,' which they might easily do by some small alteration either in their sight or in the air, 'they wearied themselves to find out Lot's door.' They saw the house, it seems, but did not discern the door, because this sudden disorder in their imagination, might either make the door appear to them like the solid wall, or the solid wall like so many doors. This is no more than what happens to several men in their liquor: that though their eyes be open, and can perceive the several objects that surround them, yet they cannot discern where-in they differ. And if we may suppose that the Syrian army was under the like argaria, (as the Greeks very happily term it) we need no longer wonder that they readily accepted of a guide, who offered his service, and bespoke them fair, (whom they might indeed take for some deputy of the town, with authority to deliver up the prophet to them) than that a drunkard, who, after a long while having lost his way, and found himself bewildered, should be thankful to any hand that would pro mise to conduct him safe home. Stackhouse.

While the Syrians were involved in this dilemma, and perplexed concerning the means of extricating themselves, the king proposed to the prophet the putting of them all to death; which he absolutely opposed, as a proceeding incompatible with his honour and justice, and only to be allowed in cases of battle. He also observed, that those people were guilty of no act of hostility upon his country, and only brought thither by the will and power of God, without any malicious intention, or so much as the knowledge of what they did; and therefore gave his opinion, that it would redound most to his honour to treat them with hospitality and respect, and then leave them to their dis-Wherefore Jehoram took the cretion. prophet's advice, gave them a splendid and liberal entertainment, and so sent them back again unhurt and safe to their master.*

At their return, they gave the king a particular account of this wonderful adventure; upon the hearing of which his conscience was struck with a conviction that the hand of God was manifestly in this prodigy, and that what the prophet delivered in the name of God was no other than the dictate of divine inspira-

After this time, Benhadad never entered into any secret practice against the king of Israel, but resolved to make open war upon him, relying on his great strength and numbers.

Upon this resolution, Benhadad raised a mighty army, and marched with his whole force against Jehoram, who, finding himself too weak to venture his all upon the event of a field-battle, kept himself within the walls of Samaria, where he had good works and defences. It being a strong place, Benhadad was in some doubt whether to attempt it by assault or by famine; however, siege was laid to the town, and the garrison reduced to so miserable a scarcity of provisions, that an ass's head sold for fourscore pieces of silver,+ and a pint and a half of pigeon's dung for five pieces.t

at once, with a regular and formed army, and to besiege Samaria. For in this sense Josephus takes it, when he tells us, that, after this time, 'Adad (for so he calls Benhadad) never entered into any underhand practice against the king of Israel, but resolved to make open war upon him, in confidence of his greater strength and numbers.'
—Calmet's Commentary and Poole's Annota-

^{*} Though, according to the rigour of the laws of arms, a conqueror is at liberty to put whatever enemies fall into his hands, if he pleases, to the sword; yet the laws of humanity and compassion, of honour and good nature, should always restrain us from treating with the utmost severity, such as surrender themselves and implore our mercy; but, besides the humanity and charity of the thing, there was this prudence and policy in the kind treatment of the Syrians, that, by this means, their hearts might be mollified towards the Israelites, that, upon their return, they might become, as it were, so many preachers of the power and greatness of the God of Israel, and not only be afraid themselves, but dissuade others likewise from opposing a people that had so invincible a protector. Several heathens have observed, that injuries are more gloriously overcome by benefits, than requited by pertinacious and mutual hatred; but the sense of benefits in bad natures does not last long: for no sooner do we read of the kind treatment which the Syrians received, 2 Kings vi. 23. but it immediately follows, that the king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up and besieged Samaria; which does not so well agree with what is said in the preceding verse, viz. that the bands of the Syrians came no more into the land of Israel. But now, as we can hardly think, that any author whatever would contradict himself in the same breath, so we must suppose, either that the Syrians quite retreated for this time, and laid aside all thoughts of war, though afterwards they altered their minds, and broke out again into hostilities; or (what seems more plain) that their bands made no more incursions and inroads, but that they were resolved to fall upon the Israelites tion has rendered dove's dung; but interpreters

⁺ If we reckon these pieces of silver, or shekels, at fifteen pence a-piece, they come to five pounds sterling; a vast price for that which had on it so little meat, and that unclean, according to the law, Lev. xi. 26. In times of famine, however, and extreme necessity, the Jews themselves were absolved from the observation of the law; nor do there want instances in history, where other people, upon the same occasion, have been reduced to the like distress, if what Plutarch (in the life of Artaxerxes) tells us, be true, viz. that, in that prince's war with the Caducii, an ass's head could scarce have been purchased at the price of sixty drachms, i e. two pounds and five shillings of our money.—Calmet's Commentary and Prideaux's

I What we, in this place, call pulse, our transla-

In this extremity, nothing gave the king so much concern as an apprehension that some person might betray the place to the enemy, under the force and necessity of an insupportable famine; so that he every day visited the walls and the guards, took care that no spies should enter privately into the town, and had a vigilant eye upon all the motions and practices of the garrison and inhabitants.

As the king was attending his business, there came a woman crying to him for help; and Jehoram, supposing she had come to beg of him, turned her off with this angry rebuke: "I have no barns nor wine-presses; and what have I to supply your wants?"

The woman informing him she did

have been at a great loss to devise, upon what account the inhabitants of Samaria should be obliged to buy so small a quantity of it (for a cab was the least measure the Jews had for dry things) at so dear a rate. For food, for salt, for firing, for dunging their lands within the walls, several interpreters have severally applied it: but, upon a small examination, it will appear, that none of these uses could suit with the circumstances of a city so closely besieged as Samaria was. The Talmudists suppose, that they have found out the true solu-tion, by translating the term in the original, by crop of doves; for they affirm, that several people in Samaria kept many doves, to bring them provisions from the country, which were wont to disgorge what they picked up, so that their owners might sell it at a dear rate; but who can imagine, that so great a number of doves, as were necessary for this purpose, should be suffered to live in a city so pinched with famine; that doves should be so docile, and well trained up, as to bring to their masters whatever they had ranged for; or, that in a country in a manner covered with the enemy, who had altogether foraged and laid it waste, there should be found any nourishment at all? The learned Bochart therefore has not only solidly confuted these wild opinions, but has likewise farther observed, that the Arabians gave the name of dove's dung, o pr r's dung, to seven i things; lst. to a do i not that gove on dee., or stony ground; and, 2dly, to a sort of pease, or pulse, which was very common in Judea, as may be seen in 2 Sam. xvii. 28. and therefore he concludes, that the word Chersonim may very wen denote vetches, or pulse: and, for the confirmation of this, some travellers have told us, that, at Grand Cairo, and Damascus, there are magazines, where they constantly fry this kind of grain, which those who go in pilgrimage buy, and take with them, as part of the provision for their journey.— Hieroz, and Essay towards a New Translation.

not come to beg his provision, but to implore his justice, and desire that he would do her right in a controversy between her and another woman, the king asked her what it was? and she answered to this effect: " A certain neighbour and myself, that were ready to die for want of food, came to an agreement between ourselves, having each of us a little male child, to eat our children by turns, merely to preserve life. Mine was killed and dressed yesterday,* and she had her part of it; and now I should have part of her

* This terrible effect of the divine vengeance, Moses had long before told the Israelites should fall upon them, if they rebelled against God; which, at two other times besides this, namely, at the siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, and at that under Titus, came likewise to pass. The horrors of the siege under the Roman general, somewhat similar to this, but perhaps still more aggravated, are depicted in the most lively colours by the Jewish historian; and especially the miseries of famine: when "wives snatched the food from their husbands, children from their parents, and what was most lamentable, mothers even from the mouths of their infants; while they themselves were not allowed in quiet to devour the prey; for the seditions broke into any houses which they saw shut, suspecting that provisions were concealed therein; and tore the morsels from their very jaws. The old men were beaten, while grasping the food; and the women dragged by the hair, while hiding it in their hands. There was no pity for gray hairs nor infants: the children, clinging to the pieces of food, were lifted up and dashed against the ground." The following deed occurred near the end of the siege. Mary, the daughter of Eleazer, a woman of distinguished rank and fortune, at the breaking out of the troubles had fled to Jerusalem from Bethezob, the place of her residence beyond Jordan, with the relics of her fortune, and whatever stock of provisions she could procure. But of these she was plundered every day in the domiciliary visits of the soldiers. Provoked at this, she often endeavoured to exasperate the plunderers by reproaches and imprecations to kill her; but in va i. Being reliced it ling to absolute want, st. was criven by plessing langer to kill her suckling babe; and when she had dressed it, she ate the half of it, and kept the remainder covered Immediately the seditious came to her; and, attracted by the scent, threatened to slay her instantly, unless she produced the provision which she had prepared. Accordingly she uncovered what was left of her son, telling them that she had reserved a good share for them. Struck with horror and amazement at the spectacle, they departed trembling, and with reluctance less the remains to the wretched mother .- Dr Hales.

child, she breaks her word with me, and has concealed him."

Jehoram, struck with grief and horror, rent his garment, exclaiming, that he never knew what it was to be perfectly miserable till that instant; and all this might have been prevented by a word, if the prophet would have interceded with God for him. But that he would take the forfeit of his life for it; and in that heat despatched an officer to cut off his head, who immediately set forward upon this commission.

The outrageous displeasure of the king was no secret to Elisha, who told his disciples, that Jehoram, that son of a murderer, had sent an officer, who was then upon his way, to take off his head; "wherefore," addressing himself to them, "do you watch and observe him; and when he comes near the house, be sure to shut the door upon him, and detain him till the king himself shall come up, who hath now changed his mind, and is hastening after as fast as possible to prevent mischief."

They watched as they were directed, shut the door upon the man when he came, and kept him out till Jehoram appeared himself, who made all possible haste lest he should be too late to countermand the execution of the order, and to save the prophet's life.

When Jehoram came to him, he upbraided the prophet with inhumanity, in being capable of beholding the extreme distress of so many wretched persons, without once interceding with God for their relief. The prophet gave him for answer this promise and assurance, that by the same hour next day, Samaria should be so abundantly stored with all sorts of necessaries of life, that a measure of fine flour should be sold publicly in the market for one shekel, and two measures* of barley at the same rate.

The king and the court made no doubt of the truth of his predictions, having had so many proofs of their authority and credit; so that they comforted themselves upon the presage, as if it had been a thing already accomplished, and made their present difficulties easy by the hope of what was to come; but a certain favourite officer of the king, who commanded a third part of the army, thus ludicrously addressed the prophet, as the king was leaning upon him in a familiar way: "Elisha, we may as well believe that it shall rain flour and barley from heaven, as what you have now foretold; for it seems to me incredible, even to a degree of impossibility."

The prophet replied, "Make no question of it; for you shall see it. But you shall only see it, without enjoying it;" which prediction was made good.

It was a custom among the Samaritans, that no leprous person should be suffered to live within the walls of the city; and at this time there were four lepers,† who had their habitations without the gates.

The famine in the city was so extreme,

^{*} The word seah, which we render a measure, was equal to six cabs, and contained as some think six quarts, as others, a peck, and as others, a peck

and two quarts of our measure. The shekel was much about our three shillings; and to have a peck of fine flour for three shillings at other times would not have been so cheap, but, considering the present situation of things, it was wonderfully so.—Le Clerc's Commentary, and Poole's Annotations.

[†] The Jews are of opinion that these four lepers were Gehazi, and three of his sons. Persons that were leprous indeed, were not permitted to converse with other men, and, by the law of Moses, while the Israelites lived in tents, they were to be turned out of the camp, Numb. v. 2, 3. But, after they came to inhabit cities, it may be questioned whether they treated them with that rigour; since, in 2 Kings viii. 4. we find Gehazi holding discourse with the king, (which makes against his being one of the four excluded lepers) and giving him a detail of all Elisha's miracles; but this he might do by talking to him at a proper distance. Lepers, indeed, were carefully avoided, because their distemper, in these hot countries, was thought contagious; but, in the case before us, these four seem to be excluded, not so much upon the account of their distemper, as because they were useless hands. They could neither fight nor work in communion with others: they were only fruges consumere nati, and were therefore no proper persons in a siege .- Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

back into the town, or staid where they were, they had certain death before them.

Upon this deliberation they took a resolution of casting themselves upon the enemy. If they spared them they should live; or if they put them to death, it would be a gentler way of despatch. They all agreed in this proposal, as the best expedient they could pursue, and so slip away by night into the enemy's camp.

At this critical moment it pleased God to possess the Syrians with a panic, upon the imaginary noise of horses and armed men breaking in upon them; and with strength of this apprehension, they all ran in a great consternation to Benhadad, and told him that Jehoram's confederate kings of Egypt and of the islands, were just at hand, and within hearing of the march of the army. He gave the more credit to the delusion as he himself laboured under the same false imagination; so that in this consternation the whole army dispersed, and every man betook himself to flight, leaving their horses, carriages, baggage, and their whole treasure in the camp.

When the lepers approached the camp of the Syrians, they heard not the least stir; and advancing still farther, found great plenty of riches and provisions, but the place deserted; so that having eat and drank, they carried off much valuable plunder without being discovered by the

They loaded themselves repeatedly, and buried their treasures in a hole they dug for that purpose without the camp. And as they might now reasonably conclude the enemy was drawn off, they blamed themselves for not giving Jehoram and the citizens notice of their desertion; wherefore they hastened back to Samaria, and called aloud to the watchmen upon the walls, that the enemy had totally abandoned their camp; and, upon this intelligence being instantly conveyed to the

that there was no provision to be expected his friends and officers, and gave it as his from thence; so that whether they went opinion that it was a stratagem to draw his people into an ambush: * at the same time observing, "they might perhaps despair of starving us, and therefore have recourse to this invention to surprise us; and if they should but draw us out to take pos-

* In the history of the revolt of Ali Bey we have an account of a transaction very similar to the stratagem supposed to have been practised by the Syrians. The pasha of Damascus having approached the sea of Tiberias, found sheik Daher encamped there; but the sheik deferring the engagement till the next morning, during the night divided his army into three parts, and left the camp with great fires blazing, all sorts of provisions, and a large quantity of spirituous liquors, giving strict orders not to hinder the enemy from taking possession of the camp, but to come down and attack just before the dawn of day. In the middle of the night, the pasha thought to surprise sheik Daher, and marched in silence to the camp, which, to his great astonishment, he found entirely abandoned; and imagined the sheik had fled with so much precipitation, that he could not carry off the baggage and stores. The pasha thought proper to stop in the camp to refresh his soldiers. They soon fell to plunder, and drunk so freely of the liquors, that, overcome with the fatigue of the day's march, and the fumes of the spirits, they were not long ere they sunk into a profound sleep. At that time two sheiks, who were watching the enemy, came silently to the camp, and Daher having repassed the sea of Tiberias, meeting them, they all rushed into the camp, and fell upon the sleeping foe, eight thousand of whom they butchered on the spot; and the pasha, with the remainder of the troops, escaped with much difficulty to Damascus, leaving all their baggage in the hands of the victorious Daher. We subjoin another instance which still more strikingly resembles the panic of the Syrians. During the crusading wars, the armies of Saladin and Baldwin met at Gaza, and prepared for an engagement next morning. During the night, however, an unaccountable panic seized the Saracen troops; insomuch that, to a man, they took to flight, and, that they might escape the more expeditiously from the danger of which they were apprehensive, they threw off their arms and clothes, and all their military accourrements, and abandoned their baggage and stores to the soldiers of the cross. The deliverance of Samaria, however, by the sudden flight of the besiegers, and the plentiful supply of provisions the inhabitants found in the deserted camp, both of which effects are frequently realized in Eastern armies, and result from their constitution, must be ascribed to the miraculous interposition of God in behalf of the Israelites; since the supply of the city with food, and the establishment of the market. as usual, at the gate of the city, together with the violent death of the sceptical nobleman, happened king's guards, Jehoram called a council of -Paxton and Jamieson

session of the booty, they might make an | self was trodden under foot and killed in excursion upon us from their places of retirement, cut our men to pieces, and with great ease make themselves masters of the city. For these reasons therefore I am for providing against their treachery, and being the more wary for this pretence. I cannot think they are fled away, and deem it very imprudent to hazard our security upon the credit of this intelligence."

Then one of the council stood up, and with due respect to the king's proposal, observed, that it was necessary at such a juncture to send out scouts as far as Jordan; observing, that if they should happen to be taken, it might serve for a warning to others. However, he advised that they should not expose themselves too much, lest being detected, they frustrated the design of their project.

The king was much of the counsellor's opinion, and sent his scouts immediately for intelligence; who returned soon after with this report, that they had been so far without seeing so much as one enemy; but that they saw arms, corn, and several bundles of things upon the way, from whence they concluded that the Syrians had thrown them down in order to make their flight the more expeditious.

The king upon this information sent out his people to plunder Benhadad's camp, where they found a rich booty, in gold, silver, horses, and several sorts of beasts; besides an incredible quantity of grain.

Having obtained so vast a supply, the people forgot their former scarcity; for two measures of barley were sold for one shekel, and a measure of flour at the same price, according to the prediction of Elisha.

But the incredulous nobleman had no benefit from this booty; for being posted at the gate, by the king's command, to keep the people in order, that they might not crowd one another to death in their eagerness to fall upon the spoil, he himthe throng, as a judgment that befell him for his unbelief, in giving so little heed to what Elisha foretold.

Benhadad was by this time got safe to Damascus;* and when he understood that

* This celebrated city of Asia, anciently the capital of Syria, may be accounted one of the most venerable places in the world for its antiquity. It is supposed to have been founded by Ux, the son of Aram; and is, at least, known to have subsisted in the time of Abraham. It was the residence of the Syrian kings during the space of three centuries; and experienced a number of vicissitudes in every period of its history. During the time of the emperors it was one of their principal arsenals in Asia, and is celebrated by the emperor Julian as, even in his day, "the eye of the whole East." The modern city, called Damas, Domeschk, is delightfully situated about fifty miles from the sea, in a fertile and extensive plain, watered by the river which the Greeks called Chrysorrhoas, or golden river, but which is now known by the name of Barrady, and of which the ancient Abana and Pharpar are supposed to have been branches. The city is nearly two miles in length from its north-east to its north-west ex tremity, but of very inconsiderable breadth, especially near the middle of its extent, where its width is much contracted. It is surrounded by a circular wall, which is strong though not lofty; but its suburbs are extensive and irregular. Its streets are narrow, and one of them called Straight, mentioned in Acts ix. 11., still runs through the city about half a mile in length. The houses, especially those which front the streets, are very indifferently built, chiefly of mud formed into the shape of bricks and dried in the sun; but those towards the gardens, and in the squares, present a more handsome appearance. In these mud walls, however, the gates and doors are often adorned with marble portals, carved and inlaid with great beauty and variety; and the inside of the habitation, which is generally a large square court, is ornamented with fragrant trees and marble fountains, and surrounded with splendid apartments, furnished and painted in the highest style of luxury. The market places are well constructed, and adorned with a rich colonnade of variegated marble. The principal public buildings are: the castle, which is about three hundred and forty paces in length; the hospital, a charitable establishment for the reception of strangers, composing a large quadrangle, lined with a colonnade, and roofed in small domes covered with lead; and the mosque, the entrance of which is supported by four large columns of red granite; the apartments are numerous and magnificent, and the top is covered with a cupola ornamented with two minarets. Damascus is surrounded by a fruitful and delightful country, forming a plain nearly eighty miles in circumference; and the lands most adjacent to the city are formed into gardens of great extent, which are stored with fruit-trees of every description. Besides the mosques and

had excited such fear and confusion throughout his army, arose from apprehension rather than reality, he looked upon it as a declaration from heaven against him; and the anxiety arising therefrom brought upon him a dangerous

Elisha then went towards Damascus; and Benhadad being informed where he was, sent Hazael, his particular and trusty

minarets, which are the usual ornaments of Turkish cities, the gardens are filled with pleasurehouses, turrets, and similar structures; a circumstance which altogether gives to the place the appearance of a noble city in the midst of an extensive forest, and fully justifies the appellation commonly given to it by Orientals, of goutah Demesk, orchard of Damascus. The pleasantness and fertility of these grounds are chiefly to be ascribed to the waters of the Barrady, which are distributed by numberless streams and rivulets in such a manner, that every garden has a fine run of water passing through it, at once fertilizing the soil, and supplying a variety of artificial fountains and ornamental water-works. So numerous are the fruit-trees in the vicinity of the city, that those which are decayed supply the inhabitants with fire-wood; and, together with the walnut and Lombardy poplar, furnish also the principal materials for building. In these orchards the air is most salubrious, the soil remarkably productive, and the fruits, especially the apricots and grapes, as much distinguished by their superior flavour as by their extraordinary abundance. "No place in the world," says Mr Maundrell, "can promise to the beholder at a distance a greater voluptuousness;" and he mentions a tradition of the Turks. that their prophet, when approaching Damascus, took his station upon a certain precipice, in order to view the city; and, after considering its ravishing beauty and delightful aspect, was unwilling to tempt his frailty by going farther, but instantly took his departure with this remark, that there was but one paradise designed for man, and that for his part, he was resolved not to take his in this world. The air or water of Damascus, or both, are supposed to have a powerful effect in curing the leprosy, or at least in arresting its progress, while the patient remains in the place. But, with all those advantages, the climate is represented by Volney as deficient in point of salubrity. The white waters of the Barrady are found to be cold and hard; the natives are subject to frequent complaints; their fair complexions are considered as rather a sickly paleness, than the natural colour of health; and the excessive use of fruit is productive, during the summer and autumn seasons, of intermittent fevers and dysenteries. Damascus is twenty-three leagues east of Sidon, forty-five north of Jerusalem, and sixty-five south of Antioch.—Jones' Bibl. Cycl.

the alarm of chariots and horsemen, which friend, with a compliment and magnificent presents to meet him, and inquire whether the king should out-live his disease or not, and what would be the issue of it. Hazael took forty camels,* and loading them with the choicest curiosities that the court or country afforded, advanced with them towards Elisha; meeting him upon the way, he saluted him with great reverence, in the name and by the order of king Benhadad, telling him, that he had a commission to offer him those presents, and likewise to advise with him about his dis-

> * There is often in oriental countries a great deal of pomp and parade in presenting their gifts: and that not only when they are presented to princes or governors of provinces, but where they are of a more private nature. Thus Dr Russell tells us, that the money which the bridegrooms of Aleppo pay for their brides, is laid out in furniture for a chamber, in clothes, jewels, or ornaments of gold, for the bride, whose father makes some addition, according to his circumstances: which things are sent with great pomp to the bridegroom's house three days before the wedding. The like management obtains in Egypt, and is in a very lively manner described by Maillet, in his account of that country, where these gifts are carried with great pomp too to the bridegroom's house, but on the marriage-day itself, and immediately before the bride: carpets, cushions, mattresses, coverlets, pignates, dishes, basins, jewels, trinkets of gold, pearls, girdles, plate, every thing down to the wooden sandals wrought with mother-of-pearl. And through ostentation, says the writer, they never fail to load upon four or five horses what might easily be carried by one; in like manner as to the jewels, trinkets, and other things of value, they place in fifteen dishes what a single plate would very well hold.—The Syrian prince, on this occasion, in which he felt a particular interest, no doubt sent Elisha a present corresponding with his rank and magnificence; but it can scarcely be supposed that so many camels were required to carry it, or that the king would send, as a Jewish writer supposes he did, so great a quantity of provisions to one man. The meaning of the passage certainly is, that the various articles of which the present consisted, according to the modern custom of oriental courts, were carried on a number of camels for the sake of state, and that no fewer than forty were employed in the cavalcade. That these camels were not fully laden, must be evident from this, that the common load of a Turkman's camel is eight hundred pounds weight; and consequently, thirtytwo thousand pounds weight is the proper loading of forty camels; "if they were only of the Arab breed, twenty thousand pounds weight is the proper loading;" a present, as Mr Harmer justly remarks, too enormous to be sent by any one person to another.-Harmer and Paxton.

ease, whether or not he might hope for relief.

The prophet told Hazael that the king was to die; but charged him to conceal it from his master. This greatly affected Hazael, and Elisha wept in the contemplation of the miseries the people were to endure after the decease of Benhadad. When Hazael asked the prophet what might be the cause of that excessive grief; Elisha thus replied: "I cannot forbear weeping to think of the calamities that you yourself are to bring upon the Israelites. You shall put the best of their men to the sword, burn their walled cities, dash their children to death against the stones, and rip up their women with child.* Upon Hazael's inquiry how it was possible for him to compass all this mischief? The prophet informed him that he should be king of Syria. Upon this discourse Hazael left him, and returned to his master with an account that he should recover of his distemper.

On the day following he made the king a visit; and, taking his opportunity, strangled him with a wet cloth,+ and took possession of his palace and government. He was a man of great interest and reputation with the people of Syria and Damascus; insomuch, that for many successive years the memory of Benhadad and of Hazael his successor was celebrated amongst the Syrians with divine honours, not only for their bounty and generosity in general, but in particular for the magnificence of the temples they erected at Damascus, and the care they took for the honour and ornament of the city. Their images were carried about in procession, as a token of the veneration in which they were universally held.

The death of Benhadad set the heart of Jeroboam the king of Israel much at ease, as it afforded him a suspension from wars and broils, and the comfort of seeing himself once again in a state of peace. But Jehoram, the king of Judah, was no sooner vested with the sovereignty, than he sullied his legal character with the slaughter of his brothers, and his father's friends, and the commission of such outrages, as if he had been upon a competition with the worst of former kings which should be the wickedest; being prompted by his wife Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, who proved the instrument of his

[.] That dashing young children against the stones was one piece of barbarous cruelty, which the people of the East were apt to run into, in the prosecution of their wars, is plainly intimated in that passage of the Psalmist, alluding to the calamities which preceded the Babylonish captivity: 'O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery! Yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children, and throweth them against the stones,' Psal. cxxxvii. 8, 9. Nor was this inhuman practice quite out of use among nations that pretended to more politeness: for, according to the remains of ancient fame, the Grecians, when they became masters of Troy, were so cruel as to throw Astyanax, Hector's son, a child in his mother's arms, (as Homer represents him) headlong from one of the towers of the city. The ripping up women with child is the highest degree of brutal cruelty; and a cruelty for which there is no occasion, because, kill but the mother, and the child dies of course; and yet it has been often known, that, in the heat of execution, this barbarity has been committed. Nay, there is reason to believe, that Hazael, in his war with the Gileadites, 2 Kings x. 32, 33, verified this part of the prophet's prediction concerning him; for, what Amos, complaining of his cruelty to these people, calls thrashing Gilead with thrashing instruments of iron, both the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, 'He sawed the big-bellied women of Gilead with iron saws. - Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.

⁺ This he did, that no signs of violence might appear upon him; for had the people in the least suspected his being murdered, Hazael would not so easily have succeeded to the throne; because, (according to the account of Josephus,) Benhadad was a man of such reputation among the people of Syria and Damascus, that, as his memory was celebrated among them with divine honours, his death, no doubt, had it been known to have been violent, would have been fully revenged upon the murderer. We may observe, however, that history makes mention of some other princes, who have died in the same manner that Benhadad did; that the emperor Tiberius, according to Suetonius, was in his last sickness choked in his bed by a pillow crammed into his mouth, or, as Tacitus has it, was smothered to death under a vast load of bed-clothes; and that king Demetrius, the son of Philip, (as well as the emperor Frederick the Second) was hurried out of the world the same way - Calmet's Commentary.

idolatrous defection from the true worship, to the service of strange gods.

Though God would most certainly stand firm to the promise he made to king David, that he would never utterly extinguish the whole race, Jehoram did all that he could to provoke him to a total extirpation, by a daily course of impieties and abominations.

Edom at this time revolted from Jehoram, and the inhabitants made way to their apostasy by the murdering of their king (who had ever been faithful to Jehoshaphat) and by setting up another in his place.

In consequence of this indignity, the king made a speedy incursion by night, with a body of horse and charioteers, into the enemy's quarters. But they could only avenge themselves, by making some depredations on the borders, not daring to make farther progress into the country.

This expedition was so far from striking any sort of terror or apprehension into the deserters, that, on the contrary, it served for an encouragement to others to follow the example of their leaders, and to shake off their yoke likewise; for Libnah rebelled also at the same time. Such, in short, was the madness and folly of Jehoram, that he forced the Israelites up to the groves and high places of the mountains, and there to worship false gods.

He went on for some time in the defiance and contempt of law and religion, and all that could be sacred either in heaven or earth, till in the end there came a menacing letter from the prophet Elisha to him, to this effect: "That since he had audaciously and wilfully set up himself against the practice and example of his forefathers, and espoused the impious superstition of the Israelites; and not resting there neither, had likewise debauched the tribe of Judah, and the citizens of Jerusalem, from the religion of their country, into the paganish superstitions of idolatry, in making gods of images, after the example of Ahab's violence upon his people to

force them into these abominations,"—after the doing of all this, and the polluting his hands in the blood of his own brothers, and other good and righteous men, this judgment was pronounced against him, in the before-mentioned letter: "That his family, and his people, should fall into the hands of a merciless enemy, that should neither spare women nor children; that he himself should be tormented with a lingering pain in his bowels, till by little and little they should rot and fall out."

This was to be the miserable condition that should bring him at last, though too late, to a sense and a sight of his wickedness. In fine, this was the substance of the writing that was delivered to Jehoram in the name of Elisha.

CHAPTER II.

The prophet's prediction accomplished in the miserable end of Jehoram, hing of Judah.—
Extirpation of the family of Ahab, by the hand of Jehu.—Destruction of the temple dedicated to the idol Baal.—Ahab's daughter seeks revenge upon the house of David.—Her design frustrated.—And judgment falls upon her own head.

Some time after this, an army of Arabians from the borders of Ethiopia, together with a number of other barbarians, broke into the kingdom of Jehoram, ravaged the country, rifled the palace, and put the king's wife to the sword, and all his children, Ahaziah only excepted, who very narrowly escaped the fury of the enemy.

The king, after this public calamity, was smitten, according to the prophet's prediction, with a kind of plague in the bowels, which proved mortal, and carried him off in the extremest agony.* The

^{*} This disease, Dr Mead says, beyond all doubt was the dysentery, and though its continuance so long a time was very uncommon, it is by no means a thing unheard of. The intestines in time be come ulcerated by the operation of this disease. Not only blood is discharged from them, but a sort of nucous excrements likewise is thrown off

people also derided his calamity, inferring he could, making no person privy to his from the great degree of his punishment, the aggravated nature of his crimes, which had incurred the just judgment of an incensed God; and on this account, they would neither vouchsafe him a royal funeral, nor a place in his father's monu-

He lived forty years, and reigned eight; and upon his death the people of Judah placed Ahaziah upon the throne of his father.

Jehoram, king of the Israelites, was in hopes, after the death of Benhadad, that he might recover Ramoth-gilead; and with that design he levied a great army, and sat down before it.

At the siege he received a wound with an arrow from the bow of a Syrian. It was not mortal; yet he was obliged to withdraw to the city of Jezreel for the convenience of the cure, leaving his whole army behind him at the siege of Ramoth, under the command of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, who took the town by force.

Jehoram proposed, upon his recovery, to make war upon the Syrians; and in the mean time Elisha sent one of his disciples,* with holy oil, to Ramoth, there to anoint and declare Jehu king, and to do it in the name of God, and by his authority and order. The prophet gave him some other things in charge also, and commanded him to be as expeditious as

journey.

When the messenger came to the town, he found Jehu sitting with the head officers of the army, as was foretold him by Elisha; he therefore went up to him, and gave him to understand that he desired to have a short conference with him in private. Upon which Jehu rose up immediately, and the young man, following him into his apartment, took out the oil, and poured it on his head; informing him, that God had chosen him king, for the destruction of the house of Ahab, and to revenge the blood of the prophets, which against all justice was spilt by Jezebel; and that as Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and after him the family of Baasha, were utterly rooted out, and destroyed for their wickedness, so there should be none left of the wicked stock of Ahab.

As soon as he had spoken those words he conveyed himself out of the apartment in haste, and with all imaginable privacy, -Jehu returning forthwith to his place among the commanders.

The officers were very desirous of knowing the import of the young man's embassy, declaring that his looks indicated insanity.f Jehu, to disguise the fact,

and sometimes small pieces of the flesh itself; so that apparently the intestines are emitted or fall out, which is sufficient to account for the expressions that are used in the statement of king Jehoram's disease .- Horne.

^{*} The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the prophet, whom Elisha sent upon this message, was Jonah; but, upon this supposition, he must, at this time, have been a very young man, because Jeroboam the Second (in whose reign Jonah prophesied) did not ascend the throne till about fifty years after this unction of Jehu king of Israel. However this be, it is reasonable to think, that Elisha himself did not go to perform this office, either because he was now grown old, and unfit for such a journey, or because he was a person too well known, and not so proper to be employed in an affair that required secresy .- Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

⁺ The officers who were in company with Jehn, might easily perceive, by the habit, and air, and manner of speech of the person who accosted Jehn so boldly, and, when he had done his business, vanished so suddenly, that he was a prophet; but then there might be several reasons which might induce men of their profession to have a contemptible opinion of men of that order. The rigid and obscure course of life which the prophets led, their neglect of themselves, and of the things of this world, might pass with them for a kind of infatuation; and the holy exercises, to which they devoted themselves, for no more than a religious frenzy. Besides this, the false prophets they had seen in the court of Ahab had given just offence; and, by their affected gestures, and studied contortions, whereby they thought to recommend their crude enthusiasms, made them-selves justly ridiculous and contemptible. And therefore it is no wonder that these officers, at first sight, should censure a true, as they thought they had reason to judge of the false prophet, with whom they had been acquainted; especially, when we find some leading men, in the tribe of Judah, treating the prophets of the Lord, as in the

however, as they persisted in the most earnest inquiry, he told them in plain terms that he came to him with a message from God to pronounce him king.

At these words the commanders took every man his cloak, and laid them one upon another for Jehu to sit down upon, instead of a throne; and when he had taken his place, they all saluted him king, with acclamations, benedictions, and the sound of horns and trumpets, to congratulate his accession to the throne.

Jehoram was now under the surgeon's hands at Jezreel for the wounds he had received at the siege of Ramoth, and his sister's son Ahaziah was there at the same time to visit him as he lay sick of his wounds; so that Jehu took this opportunity of marching with his army to Jezreel, where he might surprise them both at once: precautioning his soldiers, as a proof of their fidelity to him, neither directly nor indirectly to give Jehoram any knowledge or intimation of the matter.

The soldiers executed their orders with great cheerfulness, possessing themselves of all the passes and avenues of the town, and keeping so strict a guard upon them, that it was morally impossible to convey any intelligence into the place without discovery.

While this was doing, Jehu mounts his chariot, and with a party of choice men advanced with all expedition toward the city.

The king had a scout abroad to observe what people passed that way, and his scout finding Jehu at the head of the troops, posted away immediately to Jehoram with tidings of a body of horse being upon their march. Upon which he despatched a horseman, with instructions to go towards the party, and tearn who they were.

appeared to acquiesce in their opinion; | The messenger went, and did according to his instructions, inquiring also into the state of the army; for the king, he said, was desirous of knowing.

Jehu admonished him not to be anxious concerning such matters, but to fall into the rear and march with them. The man complied, and the scout presently gave the king notice that his messenger had joined the troops. Jehoram upon this sent a second messenger with the same instructions, but he met with the very same treatment. When Jehoram received this information, he took his chariot himself, and along with Ahaziah the king of Judah, went out together to meet Jehu; and coming into the field of Naboth, Jehoram asked him concerning the destination of his army, when Jehu, in reply, cast some poignant reflections upon the whoredoms and witchcraft of his mother. This caused Jehoram to suspect the security of his situation, and he determined to decamp as soon as possible: he therefore told Ahaziah that he was betrayed; and as he was hastening to make his escape, Jehn shot him through the heart with an arrow, so that he sunk down and expired. Jehu then commanded Bidkar, the captain of a third part of the army, to take the carcass, and cast it out into the field of Naboth,* calling to mind what the prophet Elijah had formerly said to his father Ahab; which he himself had heard as he was sitting in a chariot behind Ahab; and

case of Ezekiel, ch. xxiii. 30, 31. and of Jeremiah, ch. xxix. 26., as fools and madmen; and some great names in the heathen world, looking upon all pretenders to inspiration in no better light.— Stackhouse.

^{*} How just are the judgments of God! It was in the field of Naboth that Jehoram met with Jehu; that very ground called to him for blood. And now this new avenger remembers that pro-phecy which he heard from the mouth of Elijah, in that very place, following the heels of Ahab, and is careful to perform it. Little did Jehu think, when he heard that message from Elijah, that his hands should act it: now, as if zealous of accomplishing the word of a prophet, he gives charge to Bidkar his captain, that the bleeding carcass of Jehoram should be cast upon that very plat of Naboth. O Naboth's blood well paid for! Ahab's blood is licked up by dogs in the very place where dogs licked Naboth's. Jehoram's blood shall manure that ground which was wrung from Naboth, and Jezebel shall add to its manuring. O garden of herbs dearly bought '-Hall,

every thing fell out accordingly.* Upon robes, planted herself in a turret-window, the death of Jehoram, Ahaziah apprehending his own life to be in danger, turned off his chariot into another road, where he thought Jehu would not find him; but he followed him to a certain acclivity, where he wounded him with an arrow, which caused him to leave his chariot, and take horse to save himself by flight. He got off to the city of Megiddo, where he soon after died of his wound; thence he was carried to Jerusalem where he was buried, after he had reigned one year, which exceeded in wickedness even the wicked reign of his father.

When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel, resolving to keep up her grandeur to the last, painted,+ and arrayed in her royal

* The words which Jehn seems to quote are these, 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite him in this place,' 2 Kings ix. 26. It is to be observed, however, that in all the history of Naboth, which is recorded in 1 Kings xxi., we find no mention made of the death of his sons: but it is no unusual thing for the scripture to supply in one place that which has been omitted in another. It is not improbable, therefore, that, as Naboth was accused of hightreason, all his family were involved in his ruin, and all his estate confiscated to the king's exchequer and what seems to confirm this opinion, is, that we find Elijah never once putting the king in mind to restore the vineyard to Naboth's children, nor the king in the time of his repentance, ever once thinking to do it, because in all human appearance there were no heirs left. Notwithstanding this, Grotius, and other learned men, have observed, that these words may signify no more than the extreme poverty to which Naboth's family was reduced by the death of their father and the confiscation of his goods: for, among the Hebrews, say they, all punishments and miseries are called blood, Lev. xvii. 4. and to take away their estate, upon which they would have lived, was in effect to take away their blood in which is the life of every creature.—Le Clerc's, Patrick's,

and Culmet's Commentaries.

† The words in the original import, 'she put her eyes in paint,' i. e. she used stibium, or antimony pulverised, to make ner eyes and eyebrows look black and large, which, in several countries, was accounted a great beauty. This is a custom in Asiatic countries to the present day. From a late traveller (Waring) in Persia, I borrow the following account:—"The Persians differ as much from us in their notions of beauty as they do in those of taste. A large, soft, and languishing black eye, with them constitutes the perfection of beauty. It is chiefly on this account that the women use

to see his entry. As he passed by her she scoffingly said, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" Jehu, seeing the woman, and hearing these words, called out to her to know who she was, and bid her come down; but on not coming immediately, he commanded the eunuchs that were then about her to cast her down headlong. ‡

the powder of antimony, which, although it adds to the vivacity of the eye, throws a kind of voluptuous languor over it, which makes it appear, if I may use the expression, dissolving in bliss. Persian women have a curious custom of making their eye-brows meet; and if this charm be denied them, they paint the forehead with a kind of preparation made for that purpose." This casts light enough on Jezebel's painting, &c.; and shows sufficiently with what design she did it, to conquer and disarm Jehu, and induce him to take her for wife, as Jarchi supposes. This staining of the eye with stibium and painting was a universal custom, not only in Asiatic countries, but also in all those that bordered on them, or had connexions with them. The prophet Ezekiel mentions the painting of the eyes, chao xxiii. 40. That the Romans ang of the eyes, chao xxiii. 40. That the Romans painted their eyes we have the most positive evidence. Pliny says, 'Such is their affectation of ornament, that they paint their eyes also.' That this painting was with stibium or antimony, is plain from these words of St Cyprian, 'Anoint your eyes, not with the devil's antimony, but with the eye-salve of Christ.' Juvenal is plain ou the same subject. Man as well as women in Roma same subject. Men as well as women in Rome practised it:

"With sooty moisture one his eye-brows dyes, And with a bodkin paints his trembling eyes."

The manner in which the women in Barbary do it Dr Russel particularly describes: "Upon the principle of strengthening the sight, as well as an ornament, it is become a general practice among the women to black the middle of their eye-lids by applying a powder called ismed. Their method of doing it is by a cylindrical piece of silver, steel, or ivory, about two inches long, made very smooth, and about the size of a common probe. This they and about the size of a common probe. This they wet with water, in order that the powd apay stick to it, and applying the middle part had zontally to the eye, they shut the eye-lids upon it, and so drawing it through between them, it blacks the inside, leaving a narrow black rim all round the edge." However the use of paint, and the art of blackening the hair, and beautifying the face, may be indulged the vanity of the female sex, it raises one's indignation to read of a Sardanapalus painting his eyes and eye-brows; of the ancient Greeks running into the same custom; and much more of the martial Romans; but there were fops in all nations then, as well as now,—Stackhouse and Clarke.

‡ According to the custom of the Eastern nations, the business of this sort of people was to

They obeyed his order; and the walls were stained with the blood that gushed from her body in the fall. As she lay upon the earth, the horsemen rode over the carcass, and trampled her to death.

After this, Jehu and his friends marched forward to the palace to refresh themselves. When they had been there some time, Jehu ordered Jezebel's servants, out of respect to her quality, to see their mistress buried,-reminding them that she was a king's daughter: but when they came to look for the body, there was nothing to be found but a piece of the skull, the palms of her hands, and the soles of her feet; the dogs having eat up all the rest.*

attend upon queens in their chambers, who, by their great fidelity and obsequiousness, gained generally the esteem, and were admitted to the confidence of those they served, and from thence into places very often of great trust and profit. It is remarked, however, of Jezebel's eunuchs, that they were far from being faithful to her, to let us see how suddenly courtiers are wont to change with the fortune of their masters.- The fate of the wretched Jezebel was peculiarly affecting and awful. To understand her situation, it is neces-sary to remark, that in all the buildings of the East, as we are informed by Shaw, the windows open into private courts, with the exception of a latticed window or balcony that looks towards the street; and this is never opened but during the celebration of some public festival, when, in the enjoyment of the liberty and revelling that then prevail, crowds of both sexes, decked out in their best apparel, and laying aside their usual reserve and restraint, go in and out when they please. The town of Jezreel was in this state of public rejoicing when the cavalcade of Jehu entered, and Jezebel, having probably got notice of the conspirators' approach, availed herself of the privilege which, on another occasion, would have been de-nied to any of her sex, and ventured to appear in public in her gayest attire, upbraiding the usurper, and determing the greatest vengeance upon him.
On a sum of Jehu, some of his partisans in the palace harded her from the window, and dashed her brain out upon the street; a mode of punishment which the reader is apt to imagine was purely accidental, and suggested to the con-spirators by the position of their victim; but it is one which has been very common in the East, as we meet with many descriptions of similar tragedies in the ancient historians of the East, and Sir Robert Ker Porter mentions its continuance in the present day,-that traveller having seen the windows of several Eastern palaces, out of which the malefactors were thrown the moment sentence was pronounced.—Patrick and Jamieson.

* To an English ear it sounds very surprising,

This circumstance confirmed Jehu more in the authenticity of Elijah's prediction, -for he had foretold, "that dogs should eat the flesh of Jezebel in the field of Jezreel."

that, during the time of a single meal, so many dogs should be on the spot, ready to devour; and should so speedily despatch this business, in the" very midst of a royal city, close under the royal gateway, and where a considerable train of people had so lately passed, and no doubt, many were continually passing: this appears extremely unaccountable; but, we find it well accounted for by Mr Bruce, whose information the reader will receive with due allowance for the different manners and ideas of countries; after which, this rapid devouring of Jezebel will not appear so extraordinary as it has hitherto done. "The bodies of those killed by the sword were hewn to pieces, and scattered about the streets, being denied burial. I was miserable, and almost driven to despair, at seeing my hunting-dogs, twice let loose by the carelessness of my servants, bringing into the court-yard the heads and arms of slaughtered men, and which I could no way prevent, but by the destruction of the dogs themselves: the quantity of carrion, and the stench of it, brought down the hyænas in hundreds from the neighbouring mountains; and, as few people in Gondor go out after it is dark, they enjoyed the streets to themselves, and seemed ready to dispute the possession of the city with the inhabitants. Often, when I went home late from the palace, and it was this time the king chose chiefly for conversation, though I had but to pass the corner of the market-place before the palace, had lanterns with me, and was surrounded with armed men, I heard them grunting by twos and threes, so near me, as to be afraid they would take some opportunity of seizing me by the leg. A pistol would have frightened them, and made them speedily run, and I constantly carried two loaded at my girdle; but the discharging a pistol in the night would have alarmed every one that heard it in the town, and it was not now the time to add any thing to people's fears. I at last scarcely ever went out, and nothing occupied my thoughts but how to escape from this bloody country, by way of Sennaar, and how I could best exert my power and influence over Yasine at Ras el Feel to pave my way, by assisting me to pass the desert, into Atbara. The king, missing me at the palace, and hearing I had not been at Ras Michael's, began to inquire who had been with me? Ayto Confu soon found Yasine, who informed him of the whole matter. Upon this I was sent for to the palace, where I found the king, without any body but menial servants. He immediately remarked, that I looked very ill; which, indeed, I found to be the case, as I had scarcely ate or slept since I saw him last, or even for some days before. He asked me, in a condoling tone, what ailed me? That, besides looking sick, I seemed as if something had ruffled me, and put me out of humour. I told him, that what he observed was true: that, coming across sided at this time in Samaria, where they were brought up; so Jehu wrote two letters thither, one to the governors of Ahab's children, and the other to the magistrates of the place, wherein he gave them to understand, that as they were well provided with horses, men, arms, chariots, and other necessaries for war, beside fortified towns and strong holds, it was incumbent on them to select from the race of Ahab a youth of the most amiable qualifications, both natural and acquired, and vest him with the regal dignity, in order to revenge the death of their lord and master, and to try how they stood affected to his interest.

The persons to whom these letters were addressed read them over with great care and attention, and agreeing upon the whole that it would not be safe, under their circumstances, to oppose a power which had already been too mighty for two great kings, they resolved to give him an answer as evasive and inconclusive as possible, implying upon the whole that they owed allegiance to no other prince but him, at

the market-place, I had seen Za Mariam, the Ras's door-keeper, with three men bound, one of whom he fell a-hacking to pieces in my presence, and upon seeing me running across the place stopping my nose, he called me to stay till he should come and despatch the other two, for he wanted to speak with me, as if he had been engaged about ordinary business; that the soldiers, in consideration of his haste, immediately fell upon the other two, whose cries were still remaining in my ears; that the hyænas, at night, would scarcely let me pass in the streets, when I returned from the palace; and the dogs fled into my house to eat pieces of human carcasses at their leisure." Without supposing that Jezreel was pestered with hyænas, like Gondor, though that is not incredible, we may easily admit of a sufficiency of dogs, accustomed to carnage, which had pulled the body of Jezebel to pieces, and had devoured it before the palace-gate, or had withdrawn with parts of it to their hiding-places. But perhaps, the mention of the head, hands, and feet, being left on the spot indicates, that it had not been removed by the dogs, but was eaten where it fell, (as those parts adjoined the members most likely to be removed,) so that the prophecy of Elijah was literally fulfilled, "in the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat Jezebel."—Calmet.

Now Ahab had seventy sons, who re- whose devotion they should ever thankful- led at this time in Samaria, where they ly and obediently remain.

Jehu wrote them word back, that if they favoured his interest, they should forthwith send him the heads of all Ahab's sons, as a token and testimony of their readiness to serve him. Whereupon the magistrates and the young men's tutors conferred together about it; and without any scruple of tenderness or compassion, agreed among themselves to cut off all their heads, and send them in baskets to Jezreel.

The king and his friends were at supper when the news arrived that the heads were come: so he ordered them to be laid in two heaps before the gate, on each side one;* and the next morning going out to view them, thus addressed himself to the people: "I had a hand in the death of my master; but whose doing is all this?" His design was to satisfy the people that this rigour toward the house of Ahab was not only according to the will of God, but

^{*} Such barbarities, shocking as they are, are far from being uncommon in the East, and so gratifying a spectacle does a number of enemies' heads seem to afford to the savage princes of that quarter of the world, that there is scarcely any one country there, even the most advanced in civilization, where instances may not be found, of sovereigns and chiefs adorning the walls and avenues of their palaces with those bloody trophies. On passing one of the gates of the seraglio in Constantinople, which stood open, Carne saw lying a number of heads of the wretched Greeks, which the boys were tumbling about like foot-balls. A traveller who was invited to the court of the Dey of Algiers, says, the first object that struck his eyes were six bleeding heads, ranged along the entrance to the palace; and Sir John Malcolm informs us, that at the storming of Ispalian, where the slaughter was beyond all description, Timour ordered seventy thousand heads to be piled up as a monument of his conquest. So fond are Eastern conquerors of these sanguinary trophies, that prisoners have been known to be put to death in cold blood, in order that a greater number of heads might be despatched from the seat of war to the victorious monarch, and so callous are the persons charged with the arrangement of them, that they often select a head of peculiar appearance and long beard, to grace the summit of the pyramid. Brutal and savage, then, as it was, the conduct of Jehu has its parallel in the habits of so many other Eastern princes, that it must be imputed, less to the barbarous temper and ferocity of the man, than the delight in blood and cruelty common to all uncivilized people.- Jamieson.

told by the mouth of the prophet. destroyed as many of the family of Ahab as he could find, and returned afterward to Samaria.

Falling into company upon the way with several of the kindred of Ahaziah, king of Jerusalem, he asked them whither they were going. They answered, they were going to pay their duty to Jehoram and king Ahaziah, having heard nothing as yet of their death by the hand of Jehu. There were two and forty of them in number, and Jehn caused them all to be slain. He happened afterward to meet with Jehonadab the son of Rechab,* his

* The Rechabites are by many writers considered as a class of holy persons, who, like the Nazarites, separated themselves from the rest of the Jews, in order that they might lead a more pious life. But this is evidently a mistake; for they were not Israelites or Jews, but Kenites or Medianites, who used to live in tents, and traverse the country in quest of pasture for their cattle, as the Nabathæan Arabs anciently did, and as the modern Arabians, and Crim-Tatars (or Tartars) still do. Their manner of living was not the result of a religious institute, but a mere civil ordinance, grounded upon a national custom. They derived their name from Jonadab the son of Rechab, a man of eminent zeal for the pure worship of God against idolatry. It was he who gave the rule of life to his children and their posterity, which is recorded by the prophet Jeremiah (xxxv. 5—7.); and which consisted of these three articles: 1. That they should drink no wine: 2. That they should neither possess nor occupy any houses, fields, or vineyards; and, 3. That they should dwell in tents. In these regulations he appears to have had no religious, but merely a prudential view, as is intimated in the reason assigned for them, viz. that they might live many days in the land where they were strangers. And such, in fact, would be the natural consequence of their temperate and quiet mode of living. On the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, with intent to besiege Jerusalem, these Rechabites, apprehending themselves in more danger in the open country, came to Jerusa-lem for safety; by these people God intended to convince the Jews of their disobedience to him; and therefore, he ordered his prophet Jeremiah to bring them to an apartment of the temple, and there offer them wine to drink, which when they refused, on account of its being contrary to their institute, which they never had violated, the prophet, after due commendation of their obedience, addressed the Jews, and reproached them, who were God's peculiar people, for being less observant of his laws, than these poor Rechabites had been of the injunctions of their ancestor. Wherefore Jehovah declares, that, 'because the Rechab-

answerable to what God himself had fore-particular friend, and a just man; who, He after the first salutation, highly commended him for his zeal in rooting out the race and family of wicked Ahab, according to the command and appointment of God.

Jehu then invited him into his chariot, to go with him to Samaria; telling him that he should now see he would spare no apostates, but put all the false priests and prophets to the sword, even every man that had seduced the people from the religion of their forefathers into the idolatrous worship of false gods; accounting it a matter of joy for a good man to see the wicked punished according to their deserts.

Jehonadab submitted to the king's pleasure, and waited upon him in his chariot to the city. Jehu, as soon as they came thither, cause strict search to be made for Ahab's relations, and put them all to death as soon as he found them; being resolved that none of Ahab's false prophets, or profane priests, should escape him, he circumvented them all by stratagem.

He appointed the people to meet him in an assembly, telling them, that if Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu should serve him twice as much, for he would worship double the number; therefore he would have all the priests and prophets of Baal to be present to a single man; for he had a great sacrifice to offer to the god of Ahab, whom they called Baal, and it should be death for any priest to absent himself.

ites had obeyed the precepts of Jonadab their father, therefore Jonadab should not want a man to stand before him for ever.' The Rechabites flourished as a community about one hundred and eighty years, and were supposed to have been dis-persed after the captivity; but modern travellers have discovered their descendants in a tribe of Bedouin Arabs, who dwell alone in the vicinity of Mecca, and are called Beni Khaibr, or the sons of Khaibr (that is, of Heber). They continue to obey the injunctions of their ancestor Rechab. "To this moment they drink no wine, and have neither vineyard, nor field, nor seed; but dwell like Arabs in tents, and are wandering nomades. They believe and observe the law of Moses by tradition, for they are not in possession of the written law."—Horne.

Thus he sent his messengers up and down Israel, to summon the priests to Samaria n

at the appointed day.

Upon their arrival, they had vestments given them, which they put on. So Jehu took Jehonadab with him into the house of Baal, where strict search was made, that there might not be any person there present more than the servants of Baal; for Jehu would not suffer (as he said) any profane intruder to intermix in the holy worship.

When Jehu found that they were all Baalites, and just entering upon the ceremony, he had fourscore men set ready at the door, that waited only the word of command to break in upon the apostates. Their orders were to put all the false prophets to the sword, and to vindicate the religion of their ancestors, under this condition and penalty, that whoever should spare the life of but one of them, his life should answer for the other's.

The word was given, and they executed their commission to the uttermost rigour. They slew them all to a man, set fire to the temple itself, and so purged the city of all its sacrilegious abominations.

This Baal was the Syrian's idol, to whom Ahab dedicated an altar in Samaria, for the sake of Ithobal his father-in-law, king of Tyre and Sidon, and assigned them priests and prophets, and other necessaries appertaining to their religion.*

Now Jehu abolished the rites and ceremonies of this worship, but permitted the Israelites to continue in their devoted attachment to the golden calves.

as Baal the infant, then it shows the wide extent of his domination. M. Sonnerat informs us, (Voy. vol. i. p. 140.) that, in November, the Hindoos light up vast fires, and illuminate their houses by night, in compliance with the institutions of Bali; who, they assert, appointed the feasts of fire; meaning, perhaps, originally, the solstitial fires. The worship of Bel, Belus, Belenus, or Belinus, was general throughout the British islands; and certain of its rites and observances are still maintained among us, notwithstanding the spread and the establishment of Christianity during so many ages. It might have been thought, that the pompous rituals of popery would have superseded the Druidical superstitions; or that the reformation to protestantism would have banished them; or that the prevalence of various sects would have reduced them to oblivion: but the fact is otherwise. Surely the roots of Druidism were struck extremely deep! What charm could render them so prevalent and permanent ?- " A town in Perthshire, on the borders of the Highlands, is called Tillie-(or Tullie-) beltane, that is, the eminence, or rising-ground, of the fire of Baal. In the neighbourhood is a Druidical temple of eight upright stones, where it is supposed the fire was kindled. At some distance from this is another temple of the same kind, but smaller, and near it a well still held in great veneration. On Beltane morning, superstitious people go to this well, and drink of it; then they make a procession round it, as we are informed, nine times. After this they in like manner go round the temple. So deep rooted is this heathenish superstition in the minds of many who reckon themselves good protestants, that they will not neglect these rites, even when Beltane falls on sabbath." (Statist. Accounts of Scotland, vol. in. p. 105.) "On the first day of May, which is called Beltan, or Bal-tein, day, all the boys in a town-ship, or hamlet, meet in the moors. They cut a table in the green sod, of a round figure, by casting a trench in the ground, of such circum-ference as to hold the whole company. They kindle a fire, and dress a repast of eggs and milk in the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oatmeal, which is toasted at the embers against a stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake into so many portions, as similar as possible to one another in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal, until it be perfectly black. They put all the bits of cake into a bounet. Every one, blindfold, draws out a portion. He who holds the bonnet is entitled to the last bit. Whoever draws the black bit, is the devoted person who is to be sacrificed to Baal, whose favour they mean to implore, in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beast. There is little doubt of these inhuman sacrifices having been once offered in this country, as well as in the East, although they now pass from the act of sacrificing, and only

^{*} As much of the heathen idolatry alluded to in the Old Testament, is derived from the rites of Baal, which rites are not yet extinct, even among ourselves, and as it appears by the number of names of places in scripture, into which this title is compounded, that his worship was extremely popular, we subjoin the following particulars, furnished by Mr Taylor. It is remarkable, that we do not find the name Baal so much in popular use east of Babylonia, nor do we find it prior to the building of Babylon. It was general, however, west of Babylonia, and to the very extremity of western Europe, including the British isles; of which every year affords abundant evidence to this day. It is true, however, that Maha Bali, the great Baal, is famous on the coast of Malabar; where his capital, Maha-Bali-puram, (or the Seven Pagodas,) is well known; though long ago swallowed ed up by the sea.

This severity against that impious generation was so far pleasing to God, that he signified to him by his prophet, that his posterity should sit upon the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.

compel the devoted person to leap three times through the flames; with which the ceremonies of this festival are closed." (Id. vol. xi. p. 621.) Mr Pennant gives a similar account, with the addition of some other circumstances .- " On the dition of some other chedules.

first of May," he says, "the herdsmen of every cut a square trench on the ground, leaving the turf in the middle; on that they make a fire of wood, on which they dress a large caudle of eggs, butter, oatmeal, and milk; and bring, beside the ingredients of the caudle, plenty of beer and whisky; for each of the company must contribute something. The rites begin with spilling some of the caudle on the ground, by way of libation; on that every one takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds, or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them : each person then turns his face to the fire, breaks off a knob, and flinging it over his shoulders, says,—' This I give to thee, preserve thou my horses ;'- this to thee, preserve thou my sheep;' and so on. that, they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals: 'this I give to thee, O fox! spare thou my lambs; — this to thee, O hooded crow!—
'this to thee, O eagle!' When the ceremony is over, they dine on the caudle." (Tour in Scotland, 1769, p. 110.) "In Ireland, Bel-tein is celebrated on the 21st June, at the time of the solstice. There, as they make fires on the tops of hills, every member of the family is made to pass through the fire; as they reckon this ceremony necessary to insure good fortune through the succeeding year. This resembles the rite used by the Romans in the Palilia. Bel-tein is also observed in Lancashire." (Dr Macpherson's Critical Dissert. xvii. p. 286.)

This pagan ceremony of lighting fires in honour of the Asiatic god Belus, gave its name to the entire month of May, which is to this day called mi na Bealtine, in the Irish language. Dr Keating, speaking of this fire of Beal, says, that the cattle were driven through it, and not sacrificed, and that the chief design of it was to keep off all contagious disorders from them for that year; and he also says, that all the inhabitants of Ireland quenched their fires on that day, and kindled them again out of some part of that fire. He adds, from an ancient glossary: "The Druids lighted two solemn fires every year, and drove all four-footed beasts through them, in order to preserve them from all contagious distempers during the current year." In Wales this annual fire is kindled in autumn, on the first day of November; which being neither at the solstice nor equinox, deserves attention. We believe it is accounted for by supposing that the lapse of ages has removed it from its ancient station, and that the obWhen Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab king of Israel, and the widow of Jehoram king of Judah, came to understand what havoc Jehu had made in her father's wicked

servance is kept on the same day, nominally, though that be now removed some weeks backward from its true station. However that may be, in North Wales, especially, this fire is attended by many ceremonies: such as running through the fire and smoke, each participator casting a stone into the fire, and at the conclusion of this action, all running off to escape from the black short-tailed sow. The food for supper must consist of parsnips, nuts, and apples: then an apple is suspended by a string, and caught by the mouth alone; or one is flung into a tub of water, and the mouth alone is privileged to catch at it. Nor are the purposes of divination absent from the fire on this evening. Each person present throws a nut into it, and those which burn bright betoken prosperity to the owners through the following year: misfortune is presaged by those that burn black and crackle. On the following morning the stones are searched for in the fire: if any be missing, let their owners make up their minds to encounter mischief-perhaps calamity. The writer of this article has witnessed the Bel-tein on midsummer-eve, in the public streets of towns in the diocese of Durham. The Bel-tein was certainly derived from the East: it is practised at this day in the ceremonies of the Derma Rajah, wherein the devotees walk barefoot over about 40 feet of burning coals. It was, we may presume, into a Bel-tein that the three Hebrew youths were cast, bound hand and foot, Dan. iii. 15. The Bel-tein, anciently, at Jerusalem, was held in the valley of Tophet; and the burning of children in honour of Moloch, was the same ceremony under an idol of another name. So general was this custom. Our bonfires are, possibly, remains of the Beltein; and the tricks of our lads in leaping over the rising flame, might be proved to have antiquity in their favour, if it were worth while.

This superstition, says Dr Macpherson, prevailed throughout the North, as well as the West. "Although the name of Bel-tein is unknown in Sweden, yet on the last of April, that is, the evening preceding our Bel-tein, the country people light great fires on the hills, and spend the night in shooting. This with them is the eve of Walburgh's Mess." Leopold Von Buch, who travelled through Norway in 1807, noticed this practice at Lödingen. His words are—"It was Hansdag-saften, the eve of St John's day. The people flocked together on an adjoining hill, to keep up a St John's fire till midnight, as is done throughout all Germany and Norway. It burnt very well, but it did not render the night a whit more light. The midnight sun shone bright and clear on the fire, and we scarcely could see it. The St John's fire has not certainly been invented in these regions, for it loses here all the power and nightly splendour which extend over whole territories in Germany. Notwithstanding this circumstance, we surrounded the fire in great good humour, and danced in continual circles the whole night

family, king Jehoram her brother as erance was as follows: Jehosheba, the sassinated, her son Ahaziah dead of his wounds and the whole stock upon the formed a resolution of exterminating the house of David, and not to leave so much as one man alive of the family to pretend to the kingdom of Judah. This was her determination, nor was it wanting to her assiduity that it was not executed. For of all the sons of Ahaziah, there was only one that escaped;* the manner of his deliv-

through." This extract informs us, not only that this custom maintains itself in the extreme north, but also throughout Germany: in short, we see that it involves all Europe. It can, therefore, occasion no surprise that we find it so inveterately established in the countries mentioned in scripture, where the sun had infinitely more power and influence, and which are much nearer to the seat of the original observances. The world was then plunged in idolatry, and we cannot wonder that this branch of it prevailed, since many of its ceremonies and superstitious rites still exist, notwithstanding the influence of the gospel. This article affords matter for serious reflection. were many cities in Palestine, into whose name the word Baal entered by composition; either, because the god Baal was adored in them; or, because these places were considered as the capital cities,-lords-superiors of their respective provinces .- Taylor's Calmet.

* The consideration of the fate that attended these royal families, is enough to make any one bless providence for having been born of a meaner parentage. The whole offspring of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, kings of Israel, was cut off for their idolatry, so that there was not one left; and the kings of Judah, having contracted an affinity with the house of Ahab, and being by them seduced into the same crime, were so destroyed by three successive massacres, that there was but one left. For, first, Jehoram slew all his brethren; then Jehu slew all his brother's children; and now Athaliah destroys all the rest that her executioners could meet with. Enraged she was to see Ahab's family cut off; and therefore she resolved to do as much by the house of David. As she was one of Ahab's family she had reason to apprehend that Jehu, who had a commission to extirpate all, would not be long before he called upon her: her only way therefore, to secure herself against him, was to usurp the throne; but this, she knew, she could not do without destroying all the royal progeny, who were no well-wishers to the worship of Baal, which she had abetted, and was resolved to maintain. And it is very likely, that Athaliah might imagine that she had slain all, and so think herself secure; or, if she suspected that this one was preserved, she might not think it advisable to make any strict search, lest thereby she should alarm the people with the notion, that there was

sister of Ahaziah, and the wife of Jehoiada the high-priest, coming into the palace, point of being utterly rooted out,-she found a male child of about a year old, whose name was Jehoash, among the dead bodies of the sons of Ahaziah, which the nurse had hid there. This child she conveyed to her own lodgings, and thence to the temple, where she concealed it through the whole six years of Athaliah's reign over Jerusalem and the two tribes, and no one of her council all the while was privy to the secret but her own husband.

> In the seventh year Jehoiada entered into an association with five captains, to force the government out of Athaliah's hand, and transfer it to the right heir.

> Their business was now only to interchange an oath of faith and secresy, and so apply themselves to the execution of the design; which they did immediately, but not without great hope of success.

> The captains that he had engaged in this enterprise travelled all over the country, with summons to the priests and Levites, and several of the principal men in their tribes, in the high-priest's name, to go up to Jerusalem, where Jehoiada told them, that they were now called up for advice about the common good of the public; and that he would lay the whole matter before them; but it must be kept private, and the case not only required secresy,

Upon their taking an oath of secresy, he told them the whole story without any reserve, showing them the child likewise that he had taken under his care and preserved; and thus addressing them, said,

"This child is your king, and a branch of that family which God had promised and foretold should never be wanting to

still a son of David's family left, which might be a means to make them uneasy under her government, and desirous of a change: besides that, she might have the vanity to think of being able, in a short time, to secure the crown to herself, in such a manner, as that she should not need to fear such a weak competitor .- Poole, Patrick, and Bedford

my advice, that you divide yourselves into three bodies; one third to be upon the guard of the king in the temple; a second third to secure the passes and avenues that lead to it; and the remainder to guard the open gate that leads to the palace. As for those that have no arms, let them be in the temple, if they think fit; but let no armed man be admitted there, except he be a priest."

Jehoiada gave order also for a select number of priests and Levites to stand with drawn swords, as a guard about the king's person, and to kill any man that should press into the temple with a weapon about him, in order to secure the life and safety of the king. They were all pleased with the advice and contrivance of the high-priest. So that the next thing to be done was the putting the project in execution.

Jehoiada, upon this, opened a magazine of armour that David had stored up in the temple, delivering out lances, arrows, and what other military weapons were there deposited, to the centurions, priests, and Levites, who planted themselves as a guard upon the temple quite round it, and so strictly beset the doors, that not a person was let in that had no business there.

The child was now produced with a royal crown upon his head; and being anointed with holy oil, according to custom, the high-priest pronounced him king; which solemnity was accompanied with innumerable acclamations by the people.

The clamour of this outery and proclamation was a terrible surprise to Athaliah, who immediately hasted away with her guards from the palace to the temple, where she herself was admitted by the priest; but the soldiers that followed her were kept out by the guards that were posted there by Jehoiada for that very purpose.

So soon as she saw the child upon the

supply the throne of David. Now it is she rent her garments, and cried out with a loud voice, "Treason! treason!" But Jehoiada commanded the officers to seize the woman, and carry her away to the brook of Kidron, and there put her to death, as the temple was not to be polluted with the blood of a sorceress.

> Order was likewise given, that if any man should attempt a rescue, they should put him to death. Those who had the charge of this commission carried her out of the gate by the horse-way, and there despatched her.

> As soon as this plot against Athaliah had taken effect, Jehoiada called all the people and soldiers together into the temple, and administered to them an oath of allegiance and fidelity to the king, for the safety and defence of his person, and the honour and preservation of his government.

> After this, the king himself took ar oath of religious reverence to God, and for the observance of those laws that Moses received from heaven, and transmitted to the people.

> The multitude, thus wrought into a religious reverence and holy awe of the true God, and filled with just indignation at idolatry and its abettors, hastened in great numbers to the temple of Baal that Athaliah, in concurrence with her husband Jehoram, had erected, in order to ingratiate themselves with Ahab, and demolished it after they had slain Mattan, the priest of Baal.

> But Jehoiada committed the holy temple to the charge of the priests and Levites, according to the appointment of David, and enjoined two solemn sacrifices to be offered up every day, with incense, according to the direction of the law; he also appointed porters out of the number of the Levites, to prevent any that were polluted from entering into the temple.

When all things were thus disposed, Jehoash was conducted out of the temple into the palace, by the captains, the govthrone, with a royal crown upon his head, ernors, and all the people, where, being placed a second time upon the throne, and received with repeated acclamations, the people gave themselves up for some days to mirth and feasting, as there was not an individual but rejoiced at the death of that wicked woman.

Jehoash was seven years of age when he began to reign. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. He was a strict observer of the laws and religion of his country, so long as Jehoiada lived.

When he arrived at years of maturity, he married two wives, with the approbation of the high-priest, had children by them of both sexes, and behaved in every respect becoming a prince.

CHAPTER III.

The pious conduct of Jehoash during the life of Jehoiada.—Apostasy after his death.—Stoning of Zechariah the prophet at his instance.—Siege of Jerusalem.—Jehoash is slain.—Succeeded by Amaziah.—The ruin of the Assyrians foretold.—Apostasy of Amaziah awfully punished.

It having pleased God, in the course of his wise providence, to chastise the Israelites, Hazael the Syrian was made the awful instrument of divine vengeance. Accordingly he advanced into their territories, spoiling all before him, and laying waste a great tract of land to the eastward beyond Jordan, particularly in the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manassel, as also Gilead and Bashan; and all this was done with little or no opposition from Jehu. being a man that spent his time in a stupid contempt of God's religion and holy laws. Having reigned eight and twenty years over Israel, Jehu died and was buried at Samaria, Jehoahaz his son succeeding him.

In the days of Jehoram and Athaliah, and of their sons, the temple was gone to ruin for want of repair, so that Jehoash the king of Jerusalem, sent for Jehoiada the high-priest, and gave him orders to send priests and Levites into all quarters of his dominions, to charge every man at half a silver shekel a head toward repairing the temple.

Notwithstanding this command, there was nothing done toward it at present; for Jehoiada well knew, that the people would not at that time contribute towards such a design. But this king, in the three and twentieth year of his reign, finding so good and needful a work to be totally forgotten and laid aside, charged the high priest and the Levites with the care of it once again,—blaming them, in some degree, for their former neglect of duty.

This put Jehoiada upon devising how the business might be brought about without any grievance to the people; and in the end he fixed upon this expedient. He caused a wooden chest to be provided, close wrought and locked, with a slit through the cover of it, to receive what pieces of money soever would be put into it. This was to be placed near the altar, and the people invited to show their good will upon this occasion towards the work in hand, in proportion to the zeal they had to the true religion and God's immediate service.

The multitude were so well pleased with the method, that they brought in gold and silver, as if emulous of exceeding each other in their donations. The chest was every day opened, the money counted, and registered by the clerk of the treasury, and then locked up again by the priest, who had the keeping of the key; and all this was done in the presence of the king.

When they had got treasure enough to begin, the king and the high-priest hired carpenters, masons, and other artificers; procured the largest and choicest timber that could be provided, and went in hand with the reparations, employing the overplus, (which was very considerable,) after the finishing of that work, upon cups, chalices, goblets, and other vessels for holy uses, over and above the oblation of daily sacrifices.

while Jehoiada lived; but in the hundred and thirtieth year of his age he died.* He was a man of singular probity and justice, and so highly esteemed as a friend to the house of David, that his body was deposited in the sepulchres of the kings. After his decease Jehoash fell off from his former zeal for religion, and the princes of the people quickly followed his example, priding themselves upon the contempt of holy things.

Upon this apostasy of the king and his ministers, God sent prophets to expostulate and reason with them, and to convince them of their wickedness; but they were so hardened in their iniquity, that neither the example of their forefathers and their families, that had been severely punished for their contempt of the laws, nor the threatenings of the prophets could avail with them; but the king caused Zechariah, the son of the high-priest Jehoiada, to be stoned to death in the very temple, without any regard to the merit and good counsels of his father.

Thus did he treat the servant of the

This regularity was exactly observed | Lord for exhorting both king and people to repentance and the administration of equal justice, and for giving a premonition of the grievous judgments that would befall them if they persisted in their iniquity. Zechariah, with his last breath, appealed to God both as his judge and as his witness, that the crime for which he died was only the giving of good advice, and being the son of a father that had deserved so well from the king; and that the death he then suffered was but the reward of those services.

After this the divine vengeance overtook the king himself; for Hazael, the king of Syria, made an inroad into his country, and having plundered and destroyed Gath, he marched directly to Jerusalem. Jehoash was so affrighted at the approach of the Syrian army, that he compounded for himself and the city, and delivered up all the treasure of the temple, as well what was dedicated to God, as the gifts of particular kings, to purchase exemption from the danger that then threatened him, and security for the future: Hazael accepted the offer, being a prodigious sum of money, and so raised the siege.

Jehoash after this was seized with a severe distemper, and the friends of Zechariah took their revenge upon him by surprise for the murder of the son of the high-priest. He was buried at Jerusalem at the age of forty-seven years; and though a man of apparent piety at his accession to the throne, he had fallen from the service of God into every kind of abomination.

Amaziah succeeded Jehoash, his father, in the government of Judah, and in the three and twentieth year of Jehoash, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu entered upon the government of Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years, not so much after the example of his father, as after that of the worst of his ancestors, who lived in open defiance of God and goodness.

^{*} This the sacred historian takes notice of, as a life remarkably long in those days; and yet Usher has observed, that in an age not far remote from our time, several men out-lived this period. The words of Joseph Scaliger, which he quotes, are to this effect: "Several persons we could mention, that have lived 120, 125, and 130 years, whom we knew, have seen, and well remember: but, in the year 1584, there was at Paris a miracle of an old man, who bore arms under Louis XI. and, at the age of 140 years and upwards had the use of his limbs and faculties entire:" but not a greater miracle was he than Thomas Parr, the son of John Parr, of Winnington, in the county of Salop, who abode with his father as long as he lived, but, after his decease, married his first wife at the age of 80. With her he lived for the space of two and thirty years, in which time he did public penance in the church of Alberbury, when he was 105. In his 122d year, he married his second wife, who abode with him as long as he lived: but at length he was brought up to London by the earl of Arundel and Surrey, in the year 1635, and shown to the king of Great Britain, when he was some months more than 152 years old. Two years after this he died in Arundel-house, and might probably have lived some years longer, had he continued in his native air .-Chronol. Sacra, c, 12.

The king of Syria in the mean time tremity, and out of tenderness to see the the government of Syria and Damascus. tion, for deliverance from the power and oppression of Hazael.

Upon his humiliation, that gracious God, who not only cherishes the innocent but pardons the penitent, and chooses rather to correct and reform the wicked, than destroy them, was prevailed upon to deliver him from the burden of a ruinous war, by a timely peace, and to restore his dominions to their former state of happiness and plenty.

After the death of Jehoahaz, Joash his son came to the government of Israel and Samaria, in the seven and thirtieth year of the reign of Jehoash king of Judah, this king and the king of Jerusalem being both of the same name. He held the government sixteen years. The prophet Elisha was now far advanced in years; and being at this time upon his death-

bed,* Joash made him a visit in his ex-* Good Elisha, who had now lived some ninety years, a wonder of prophets, and had outworn many successions in the thrones of Israel and Judah, is now cast upon the bed of his sickness; yea, of his death. His very age might seem a disease, which yet is seconded by a languishing distemper. It is not in the power of any holiness to privilege us from infirmity of body, from final dissolution. He that stretched himself upon his bed over the dead body of the Shunamite's son, and revived it, must now stretch out his own limbs on his sick bed and die. He, who had seen his master Elijah rapt up suddenly from the earth, and fetched by a fiery chariot from this vale of mortality, himself must leisurely wait for his last pangs, in a lingering passage to the same glory. There are several ways appointed to us by the divine providence unto one common blessedness.

One has more pain; another passes off with more speed: violence snatches away one; another, by

had reduced the mighty power of Jehoa- good man labouring in his agonies, burst haz to the small number of ten thousand out into tears; calling him the father, the foot and fifty horse, over-running several defender and protector of his country; obof his cities, and killing numbers of his serving, that while he lived, the people people. This calamity of the Israelites were secure against all their enemies, even was foretold by Elisha in his prediction without arms, through the benefit and to Hazael, when he told him that he blessing of his prayers; but that whenever should kill his lord, and possess himself of he was taken away, they should be left naked and defenceless, at the mercy of In this unhappy juncture, Jehoahaz had the Syrians and other enemies; and that recourse to God by prayer and supplica- therefore, for his own part, he had rather leave the world with him, than stay in it without him.

> This compassionate tenderness wrought so far upon the prophet, that, to comfort the king, he called for a bow and arrow, laid his hand upon it, and bade him bend it and shoot. He shot thrice, and then gave over; then Elisha told him that if he had let fly more shafts, he should have ruined and destroyed the whole kingdom of the Syrians; t but since he gave over at a third shot, he must content himself with three several victories over them: wherein he should recover the countries they had taken from his father.

> an insensible pace, draws every day nearer to his an insensible pace, draws every day nearer to his term. Happy is he, that, after due preparation, is passed through the gates of death, ere he be aware! Happy too is he, who, by the holy use of long sickness, is taught to see the gates of death afar off, and is prepared for a resolute passage! The one dies like Elijah, the other like Elisha; both blessedly .- Hall.

> † It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow or cast a spear into the country which an army intended to invade. Justin says that, as soon as Alexander the Great had arrived on the coasts of Iona, he threw a dart into the country of the Persians. The dart, spear, or arrow thrown, was an emblem of the commencement of hostilities. Virgil represents Turnus as giving the signal of attack by throwing a spear:

"Who first," he cried, "with me the foe will dare?" Then hurl'd a dart, the signal of the war.

Servius, in his note upon this place, shows that it was a custom to proclaim war in this way: the pater patratus, or chief of the Feciales, a sort of heralds, went to the confines of the enemy's country, and after some solemnities, said with a loud voice, "I wage war with you, for such and such reasons;" and then threw in a spear. It was then the business of the parties thus defied or warned to take the subject into consideration; and if they did not within thirty days, come to some accommodation, the war was begun .- Dr A. Clarke.

The king went his way upon these words: and the prophet expired soon after. He was a man celebrated for his justice, and without all dispute highly in God's favour, as appears by the wonderful things he did, and the miracles that he wrought. They gave him an honourable interment, answerable to the merit of so great a saint.*

It happened, after this, that a traveller was killed upon the way by thieves, and the body was thrown into the prophet's monument; which, upon the bare touch of Elisha, was immediately revived; so that both dead and living this prophet wrought miracles.

* The common places of burying among the Hebrews, were in the fields, in caverns dug into a rock, with niches for the bodies to be placed in, and, at the entrance of the sepulchre there was a hewn stone, which might be removed or replaced without any damage to the tomb. The Jews (as Josephus informs us) gave Elisha a pompous and honourable interment, answerable to the dignity and merit of so great a prophet; but he does not tell us where the place of his sepulture was. Hereupon some have imagined, that he was carried to Abel-meholah, the place of his nativity, to be there interred among his ancestors: others think, that he was at first buried on mount Carmel, a favourite place of his, and afterwards removed to Samaria. Others again say, that he was buried at Ninevel; and, to this very day, the inhabitants show his monument at Mosul, which was built, as they say, upon the very same spot where old Nineveh stood. But the most prevailing opinion, founded upon a constant tradition, is, that he was buried somewhere in the neighbourhood of Samaria, because there, to all appearance, he died. The tomb, however, that is usually shown for his in that city, can be nothing more than the repository of his remains, since his original burying-place was certainly at some distance from it. - Jewish Antiq. lib. ix. c. 9.

† Josephus, who gives the above account of this transaction, varies a little from the sacred history; and the Jewish doctors, who love to improve upon every miracle, tell us, that this person, (whom they pretend to call Sellum) after he was revived, did presently die again, because he was a wicked man, and did not deserve to live long; never considering, that his hasty death afterwards was the ready way to impair the credit of the miracle, and make it indeed of no effect. However this may be, it is certain, that by this miracle, (as we find it related in stripture) God did the highest honour to his prophet, and confirmed the truth of what he had promised to the king of Israel, as well as the certainty of a future life; in which sense some part of the character, which the author of Ecclesiasticus, chap. xiviii. 12, &c. gives him, may not improperty be understood: Elisha was filled

Hazael was now dead, and the kingdom of Syria devolved by hereditary right to his son Benhadad, who was overthrown by Joash in three battles; and all that country recovered to the Israelites, which his father had wrested from them, according to the prediction of Elisha. Upon the death of Joash, Jeroboam his son, the second of that name, entered upon the government.

In the second year of Joash king of Israel, Amaziah came to the government of the tribe of Judah, in the city of Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan, a native of the place. He had a reverence for justice, even in his youth; and began his administration in revenging the death of his father upon those persons who had treacherously murdered him, under a cloak of friendship. He brought the assassins to public justice, but spared their children, according to the laws prescribed by Moses, who deemed it unreasonable to punish the children for the iniquity of the fathers.†

After this he levied an army of select men from among the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and appointed proper officers over them. Besides this chosen body, which consisted of three hundred thousand, he treated with the king of the Israelites for one hundred thousand auxiliaries, at the rate of an hundred talents of silver§ for their hire, paid down immedi-

with Elijah's spirit; whilst he was not moved with the presence of any prince, neither could any bring him into subjection: no word could overcome him; and, after his death, his body prophesied: he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.'—Jewish Antiq. and Calmet's Commentary.

Calmet's Commentary.

‡ In this he acted like a good man, and contrary to the wicked customs of many kingdoms, where, if any one be guilty of high-treason, not only he, but his children likewise, who are neither conscious nor partakers of any of his traitorous practices, are equally devoted to destruction, lest they (forsooth) should form any faction against the prince, or seek revenge for their father's death.—Le Clerc's. Commentary.

§ If we reckon each talent at a hundred and twenty-five pounds weight, and each pound weight at four pounds in value, the whole will amount to ately, being fully determined to make war down the precipice and destroyed; stroyed, together with those that joined with them; adding, moreover, that he had a sufficient force of his own, with God's assistance, to overcome the enemy.

The king having already parted with his money, was not a little troubled at the thought of losing both his pay and his men; yet upon the prophet's counsel to resign himself wholly to the will of God, under whose protection he should be sure to want nothing, he discharged his auxiliaries, observing, that he frankly bestowed that treasure upon them as bounty, which they had received only as hire.

Immediately upon parting with his mercenaries, he advanced with his own troops against the combined enemies, which he overcame, cut off ten thousand of them in one battle, and carried away ten thousand more to the top of a great rock, that overlooks Arabia, where they were all thrown

fifty thousand pounds sterling, which will be but ten shillings to each man, officers included. Very low pay! unless we suppose, that this whole sum was given to the king of Israel for the loan of so many men, and that the men were to have their pay besides; or rather, that they were to have no other pay but the booty which they took from the enemy, and that this was the true reason why they were so exasperated at their dismission as to fall upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, 2 Chron. xxv. 13. They went very probably first to Samaria, where they complained to their own king of the bad treatment they had received from Amaziah, and desired some reparation to be made them for the affront put upon them, and the loss of the profit which they might have made in the war : but, finding him not inclinable to make them satisfaction, they immediately fell foul upon the territories of Judah, and, from Samaria (for that is the place of their setting out) even to Beth-horon, a town not far distant from Jerusalem, ravaged the country, and did the mischief here mentioned; which they might more easily do, because the war with Edom had drained the country of all the forces that should have opposed them .- Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

upon the Amalekites, the Edomites, and Amaziah then returned home with great the Gebalites. As he was just upon the booty. But the Israelitish mercenaries point of marching against them, a man of were so incensed at being dismissed in so God advised him by all means to dismiss abrupt a manner, and without any just the Israelites; for they were a wicked cause being assigned, that, to revenge the generation, and would certainly be de- contempt cast upon them, they made an inroad into the territories of Amaziah, laying all waste as far as Beth-horon, putting three thousand people to the sword, and carrying away a great number of their cattle.

> Amaziah was so elated by his late victory, that, regardless of that God by whom alone kings reign, he degenerated from his pure worship into the abominable idolatry of the Amalekites. The prophet, upon this, went to the king, and told him, that he could not but wonder at his confiding in those powers, that were so far from being able to protect their servants, that they could not defend themselves, but were taken prisoners by the Hebrews, and carried away like slaves to Jerusalem, with the rest of the spoil.+

+ Idolatry at the best can no ways be apologized for; but no reason can be invented why any person should make the objects of his adoration such gods as could 'not deliver their own people out of the enemies' hands,' as the prophet very justly reproves Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 15. unless we suppose that the images of these gods were so very beautiful, that he perfectly fell in love with them, or that he worshipped them for fear they should owe him a spite, and do him some mis-

^{*} That this was an ancient punishment among the Romans, who used to throw certain malefac-tors from the Tarpeian rock, we may learn from Livy, Plutarch, and several others; and Pitt informs us that the same practice obtains among the Moors at Constantine, a town in Barbary; but we do not find it commonly practised among the Jews. We have, however, two instances,-that in which the Jews attempted to precipitate Jesus Christ from the brow of a mountain; and the other, that of James, surnamed the Just, who was thrown from the highest part of the temple into the subjacent valley. It is not in the catalogue of the punishments which Moses enacts; neither was it ever inflicted by any regular judicature: and therefore one would think, that the Edomites, either by some such like cruelty to the people of Judah, had provoked them to make retaliation in this manner, or that they were, in their very disposition, so apt to revolt, that there could be no keeping them in subjection without some such sad exemplary punishment as this .- Calmet and Le Clerc.

provoked the king's wrath, insomuch that ne forbade him, at his peril, to interfere any further in a business that did not con-The prophet's answer was, cern him. that for the future he would be quiet; but assured him; that God would take severe vengeance on him for this wicked and idolatrous innovation in religion which he had introduced.

But this infatuated prince was so transported with vanity and insolence upon his late success, that, without any regard to the hand of divine providence, he wrote an imperious letter some time after to Joash, the king of the Israelites, commanding him and his people to pay the same allegiance to him which they had formerly rendered to his ancestors David and Solomon; or, in case of their refusal, to expect a decision of the cause by the sword; to which summons Joash returned this answer:

"King Joash to king Amaziah, greeting,-It happened, once upon a time, betwixt a cedar tree, and a thistle, upon mount Lebanon, that the thistle sent to the cedar, saying, Give thy daughter to my son for wife; whereupon there came a wild beast and trode down the thistle.*

These words of the prophet highly | Make use of this example for your own instruction, and moderate your own ambition, without aspiring to things out of your reach. Take care that your confidence and pride, for the overthrow of the Edomites, do not betray you some time or other to the loss of your life and king-

This answer to Amaziah was but as oil to the flame, and made him ten times more furious and implacable than before; God in his justice giving him up, as may be reasonably supposed, to such a violence of rage and passion, as would certainly expose him to the stroke of divine justice for his impiety.

In this enraged state of mind he took the field, and both armies were drawn up in form of battle. But no sooner were his men advanced within sight of the enemy, than they were instantly struck with such consternation and terror, that they turned their backs without striking a blow, and, flying several ways, left Amaziah prisoner in the hands of his enemy, who refused to give him quarters upon any other terms, than that the citizens of Jerusalem should set open the gates, and receive him and his victorious army into the town.

With these hard terms the present crisis obliged him to comply, having life or death immediately before him; so that Joash entered the town in his triumphal chariot, through a breach of about four hundred cubits of wall that he had caused to be broken down, with his prisoner Amaziah marching along with him; and this was the splendid manner in which he took possession of the place, making himself master of the city.

He made a seizure of all the holy plate and treasure, and of all the gold and silver likewise that he could find in the palace, carrying the whole spoil away with him; and then dismissing the king,

chief, in revenge for what he had done against How much more wise were the the Edomites. sentiments of Fabricius Maximus upon the like occasion, who, having conquered Tarentum, and being asked what should be done with their gods? 'Bid them leave them with the Tarentines; for what madness is it,' as he adds, 'to hope for any safety from those that cannot preserve themselves?'-Patrick's Commentary.

* It was a custom among the oriental people to deliver their sentiments in parables, in which they made a great part of their wisdom to consist : and, considering the circumstances of the person he addressed, who was a petty prince, flushed with a little good success, and thereupon impatient to enlarge his kingdom, no similitude could be better adapted than that of a thistle, a low contemptible shrub, but, upon its having drawn blood of some traveller, growing proud, and affecting an equality with the cedar, (a tall, stately tree, that is the pride and ornament of the wood,) till, in the midst of all its arrogance and presumption, it is unhap-pily trodden down by the beasts of the forests, 2 Kings xiv. 9. which Joash intimates would be Amaziah's fate, if he continued to provoke a

prince of his superior power and strength .- Le Clerc's, Calmet's, and Putrich's Commentaries.

he returned to Samaria. This calamity at Samaria, in the palace of his forefathers, befell Jerusalem in the fourteenth year of Amaziah's reign.

The people of Jerusalem, after this, entered into a conspiracy against him,* so that he was forced to fly for safety to Lachish; but his flight availed not, for the assassins followed him thither, and murdered him upon the spot.

His body was carried back to Jerusaiem, where it was buried in royal state. This was the miserable end of the once victorious Amaziah, for the neglect of God's worship, and introducing innovations in his holy religion.

He died in the one and fiftieth year of his age, and twenty-ninth of his reign, leaving his son Uzziah successor to his government.

CHAPTER IV.

Jonah prophesies against Nineveh .- Uzziah begins his reign well, but degenerates, and is punished.—Several successive kings obtain the crown by the heinous crime of murder .- Victorious character of Jotham, king of Judah .-Nahum foretells the destruction of Nineveh, and the Assyrian empire. Jotham des, and is succeeded by Ahaz, an idolatrous prince, who is vanquished on his accession by his enemies with great slaughter.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, Jeroboam, the son of Joash, was made king over Israel, and kept his court

* What provoked the people of Jerusalem, more than any other part of the nation, against their king, was, their seeing their city spoiled of its best ornaments, exposed to reproach upon account of the great breach that was made in their wall, and several of their children carried away as hostages for their good behaviour; all which they imputed to their king's maladministration. Whereupon they entered into a conspiracy against him, which makes some commentators say, that he lived in a state of exile at Lachish the space of twelve years, not daring to continue longer in Jerusalem after the defeat which Joash land given him. But Usher has placed this conspiracy in the last year of Amaziah's reign, as Jacobus Capellus supposes that it was set on foot by the great men of Jerusalem upon the specious pretence of being guardians to the young prince, and taking better care of him than his father was likely to do.—Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

for forty years of his reign.

He was a prince impious to the highest degree, wholly abandoned to idolatry; and so licentious, that he gratified his inordinate desire, in violation of all law, civil or religious; and the judgments which his profligate course of life brought upon the Israelites were almost innumerable. It was foretold of him by Jonah+ the prophet, that he should overcome the Syrians, and enlarge the territories as far as the city Hamath on the north, and the lake Asphaltites on the south, which were formerly the bounds of the land of Canaan, according to the allotment of Joshua the general.

Jeroboam was so elevated upon this prediction, that he took away from the Syrians all the tract of ground beforementioned, and annexed it to his own dominions; and made good the prediction of the prophecy of Jonah; and the circumstances attending it, being so peculiar in their nature, and so demonstrative of the divine power, cannot with justice be omitted in this history, and is therefore related in the following plain manner.

"The word of the Lord came unto Jonah, saying, Arise, and go to Nineveh, t

+ Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a Galilean, a native of Gath-hepher, which is believed to be the same as Jotapata, celebrated for the siege which Josephus the historian there maintained against the Roman army, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem. Gath-hepher was situated in the land of Zebulun, where was the canton of Ophir or Hepher. St Jerome places it two miles from Sepphoris, in the way towards Tiberias. Some Rabbins are of opinion that Jonah was the widow of Sarepta's son, restored to life by Elijah.

† Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire,

could boast of the remotest antiquity. It was founded by Nimrod, or (as the text of Gen. x. 11. may be rendered) by Ashur the son of Shem: by the Greeks and Romans it was called Ninus. According to some writers, it stood on the eastern banks of the Tigris above Babylon, while others represent it as being erected on the western bank: it may very probably have occupied both. This city was very splendid, and of great extent: according to Diodorus Siculus, it was 480 stadia or 48 English miles (others estimate it 60 miles) in circumference: in the time of Jonah, it was "an exceeding great city of three days' journey," containing "more than six-score thousand persons

and there cry aloud to them, that that | great kingdom is to be suddenly destroyed; but Jonah, to avoid the danger of being author of such tidings to them, thought it better to go out of the way, (as if he could hide himself from God,) and therefore went on board a vessel at Joppa,* that was bound for Tarshish in Cilicia.

that could not discern between their right hand and their left;" that is, children not arrived at the use of reason. As children make, generally, about one-fifth part of the inhabitants of cities, it is prenmed that Ninevell contained above 600,000 persons. Its destruction within forty days, which that prophet had denounced, was averted by the general repentance and humiliation of the inhabitants, and was suspended for nearly 200 years, until 'their iniquity came to the full;' and then the prophecy was literally accomplished, in the third year of the siege of the city, by the combined Medes and Babylonians; the king, Sardanapalus, being encouraged to hold out in consequence of an ancient prophecy that Nineveh should never be taken by assault, till the river became its enemy; when a mighty inundation of the river, swollen by continual rains, came up against a part of the city, and threw down twenty stadia of the wall in length; upon which the king, conceiving that the oracle was accomplished, burnt himself, his concubines, eunuchs, and treasures; and the enemy, entering by the breach, sacked and rased the city, about B. c. 606. Of this once celebrated city there are literally no remains. Four mounds. the largest running north and south, and the most southerly called after the prophet Jonah, whose tomb it is supposed to contain, exhibit all that can now be traced of the metropolis of Asia.-Horne.

 Joppa is a sea-port town in Palestine, upon the Mediterranean, and was formerly the only port which the Jews had upon that coast, whither all the materials, that were sent from Tyre, towards the building of Solomon's temple, were brought, and landed. The town itself is very ancient, for profane authors reckon it was built before the flood, and derive the name of it from Joppa, the daughter of Elolus, and the wife of Cepheus, who was the founder of it. Others are rather inclined to believe that it was built by Japhet, and from him had the name of Japho, which was afterwards moulded into Joppa, but is now generally called Jaffa, which comes nearer to the first appellation. The town is situated in a fine plain, between Jamuia to the south; Cæsarea of Palestine to the north; and Rama or Ramula, to the east; but at present is in a poor and mean condition; and as a station for vessels, its harbour is one of the worst in the Mediterranean,-ships generally anchoring about a mile from the town, to avoid the shoals and rocks of the place. house of the British vice-consul (signor Damiani), in 1831, stood on the reputed site of the house which had been Simon the Tanner's, the host of the apostle Peter; and a portion of an ancient wall therein, was pointed out as a genuine relic of the While they were upon the way, there arose a violent tempest, that put the master and the mariners, and the pilot himself, into the greatest apprehension of danger. But it was observed, that while the crew were at their prayers, and labouring to keep the ship above water, Jonah was the only man that did not exert himself, but lay flat upon his face in the hold, with his head covered.

The wind and the storm increasing, the company were induced to think that this calamity had befallen them for the wickedness of some of the people they had on board; and therefore agreed among themselves to put it to the lot in order to discover the man. They did so, and the lot fell upon the prophet.

original mansion. The chief thing for which this place was famous, in ancient Pagan history, is the exposition of Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus, king of Egypt, who for her mother's pride was bound to a rock, in order to be devoured by a seamonster, but was delivered by the valour and bravery of Perseus, who afterwards married her; for, in the times of Mela and Pliny, there were some marks remaining, as they themselves testify, of the chains wherewith this royal virgin was bound to the rock, which projects into the sea. But all this is mere fiction, first founded upon the adventure of Jonah, who set sail from this port, and then improved with the accession of some particular circumstances.— Calmet, &c.

particular circumstances.—Calmet, &c.

† The Jewish doctors, who are great lovers of prodigies, are not even satisfied with what they meet with in this history of Jonah, but have over and above added, that as soon as the ship, wherein he was embarked, was under sail, it all on a sudden stood stock still, so that it could be made to move neither backward nor forward, notwithstanding all the pains that the mariners took in rowing: but others, with more probability, say, that while all the rest of the ships were quiet and unmolested, the storm fell upon none but that wherein Jonah was, which made the seamen think that there was something miraculous in it, and thereupon called upon the company, that sailed with them, to come and cast lots, as the superstitious custom among the heathens was whenever they were in any great distress; that, accordingly, they cast lots three different times, which still fell upon Jonah; and that they let him down several times with a rope, without plunging him into the sea, and as often as they did it, found the storm abate, and whenever they pulled him up again, found it increase; so that, at last, they were forced to commit him to the mercy of the waves: all which are circumstances which the scripture account neither favours nor contradicts. It may be proper, however, to remark, on the testimony of Roberts, who

This put the crew upon inquiring what he was, and what might be his business? He told them that he was an Israelite, and a prophet of God; adding that he was the man that had raised the storm; and they had no way left to save themselves and the vessel but by casting him over board.

It first appeared to them in so odious a light, thus cruelly to deliver up a stranger, who had put his very life into their hands, to certain and inevitable destruction, that they durst not resolve upon it.

But, at last, partly by the extreme necessity of the case, (for the ship was upon the very point of sinking,) partly by the authority of the prophet, and partly by their own fear, they were prevailed upon, and threw him into the sea; at which instant the storm ceased.

The sacred history says that he was taken up by a whale,* and after three

had much acquaintance with heathen sailors, that, on the approach of danger, they cry, like the crew of Jonah's vessel, 'every man to his god.' "More than once," says he, "have I been in these circumstances, and never can I forget the horror and helplessness of the poor idolaters. They invariably ascribe the storm to some one on board, who has committed a great crime, and, instead of labouring at the oar, look about and inquire who is the sinner. Some time ago a number of native vessels left the roads of Negapatam, at the same hour, for Point Pedro in the island of Ceylon; they had not been long at sea before it was perceived that one of them could not make any way; she rolled and pitched and veered about in every direction, but the other vessels went on beautifully before the wind. The captain and his crew began to look at the passengers, and at last fixed their eyes upon a poor woman, who was crouched in a corner of the hold; they inquired into her condition, and found that she was in a state of impurity. down the canoe,' was the order, 'and take this woman ashore.' In vain she remonstrated; she was compelled to enter, and was soon landed on the beach. To appease the angry gods, the sailors 'offered sacrifice' of cocoa nuts, which were the only articles on board." Such were exactly the notions of the mariners respecting Jonah, and the Lord employed their superstition as the means of bringing the disobedient prophet to penitence and submission .- Calmet and Jamieson.

* Bochart has long since attempted to prove that a great fish of the shark kind is here intended. It is a well-attested fact that many of the shark species are not only of such a size and form as to be able, without any miracle, to swallow a man whole, but also that men have been found entire

days, cast up again, alive and unhurt, upon the shore; from whence, after pardon obtained from almighty God for his disobedience, he went directly to Nineveh,

in their stomachs; and, since it is a fact well known to physiologists, that the stomach has no power over substances endued with vitality, this circumstance will account in part for the miraculous preservation of the prophet Jonah in the belly or stomach of the great fish, in which he was for three days and three nights. Bochart is further of opinion, that the particular species of shark which followed the prophet Jonah was the squalus carcharias or white shark, for its voracity termed lamia by some naturalists, and which is a native of the seas in hot climates, where it is the terror of navigators. Mr Rae Wilson, the day after a violent storm exactly in the same portion of the sea where the ship with Jonah on board encountered the tempest, observed several very 'great fishes' sporting about the ship, some of which could not be less than sixty feet in length, and appeared as long as the vessel itself on board of which he was embarked. Bishop Jebb, however, has urged several considerations (which are too long for insertion here, and the force of which it would impair to abridge,) showing that it probably was a whale, into the cavity of whose mouth Jonah was taken. The observations which he has adduced from the natural history of the whale are confirmed by the enterprising and experienced whale-fisher, Captain Scoresby; who states, that when the mouth of the Balæna Mysticetus, or Great Common Whale, is open, "it presents a cavity as large as a room, and capable of containing a merchant ship's jolly-boat full of men, being six or eight feet wide, ten or twelve feet high (in front), and fifteen or sixteen feet long." And we are told of one cast upon the coast of Tuscany, in the year 1624, whose jaws were so wide that a man on horseback might have walked into them with ease; and we have not much reason to doubt, but that their throat and belly are answerable to so spacious an opening. It cannot be thought indeed, but the cesophagus, in creatures that are dead, must be contracted to a great degree in comparison to what it is when they are alive, and especially when they are eating; in which case it is capable of so great dilatation, (as is evident from a pike's sometimes swallowing another fish almost of his own magnitude) that we need not much fear but that the fish which God had provided for that purpose, was able to gulp Jonah down at once, without ever hurting him. For the whale, as we are told, has neither teeth nor tushes, whereas the sea-dog has four or five rows of teeth in each jaw, and is therefore the much properer of the two to receive into its stomach any thing alive, without the danger of contusion. Nor is it only in the sacred records that we meet with this history of Jonah, but in the fables related by several heathen authors both in verse and prose we find evident memorials of it. Hercules was the great champion of the Grecians, and his fame they were wont to adorn with all the remarkable exploits that they could in any nation hear of. It is not improbable, therefore, that the

according to his commission; where, when he arrived, getting upon an eminence, that he might be more generally heard, he foretold that the empire of Asia was near at an end. And having published this prophetical declaration, he departed.

But to return to Jeroboam. After a prosperous reign of forty years, he was buried at Samaria; Zechariah his son succeeding him, as Uzziah succeeded Amaziah in the fourteenth year of Jeroboam, to the government of the two tribes at Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah, a native of Jerusalem.

Uzziah was a man of great courtesy and justice; brave, provident, and industrious; he made war upon the Philistines, and took Gath and Jabneh from them by assault, demolishing their walls. He made another expedition also against the Arabians, who bordered upon Egypt, and built a town near the Red sea, which he guarded by a strong garrison. After this he subdued the Ammonites, and laid them under contribution, reducing the whole country as far as the frontiers of Egypt.

adventure of his jumping down the throat of the sea-dog which Neptune had sent to devour him, and there concealing himself for three days, without any manner of hurt, save the loss of a few hairs which came off by the heat of the creature's stomach, was founded upon some blind tradition which these people might have of what happened to Jonah. Nor can the known story of Arion, thrown overboard by the seamen, but taken up by a dolphin, and carried safe to Corinth, be justly referred to any other original; since, besides some resemblance in their names, and no great disparity in the times wherein they lived, (which are both circumstances that make for this hypothesis) the supposed difference in their respective callings can be no manner of objection to it, because the same word in the Hebrew tongue signifies both a prophet and a musician. And therefore it is remarkable that, as Arion played the tune wherewith he charmed and allured the fish to save him before he jumped overboard; so Jonah, when he found himself safely landed, attered what is called a prayer indeed, but is in reality a lofty hymn, in commem-oration of his great deliverance, as appears by this specimen: 'The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, and weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth, with her bars, was about me for ever; yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God.'—Horne and Stackhouse.

He then applied himself to the rebuilding and repairing of the parts of the walls of the city, which were decayed by age or the neglect of former governors; as well as that breach which the king of the Israelites had made, when Amaziah was his prisoner, at his triumphant entrance into the city. He erected also several towers of one hundred and fifty cebits in height, and built castles and several strong forts for the security of the open country, besides many aqueducts, cisterns, and basons, for the relief of his herds and cattle, whereof the number was incredible, the country being naturally disposed for pasture. He was himself a great lover of tillage, planting, gardening, nurseries, and all sorts of husbandry.

As to military affairs, he had an army of three hundred and seventy thousand select men, under the command of two thousand brave experienced officers, all well-armed, with swords, bucklers, brazen corselets, bows, slings, and trained to the exercise of arms after the most accurate method of martial discipline. He had several machines and engines* also for

^{*} This is the first time we read of any machine, either for besieging or defending towns; which is plainly the reason why sieges were of so long a continuance before the invention of these. Homer, who is the most ancient Greek writer we know of that treats of sieges, describes a kind of intrenchment, (though a poor one,) some lines of circumvallation, and a ditch with pallisades; but we hear not one word of any machines, such as the balistæ, and the catapultæ, which were used for hurling stones, and throwing darts; and therefore we need less wonder that the famous siege of Troy continued so long. Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers (as Diodorus observes, lib. ii.) wanted such engines as were fit for demolishing and taking of cities, they being not then invented. Shalmaneser lay three years before Samaria, 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6 and, as some say, Psammetichus lay twenty before Azoth. Now of Uzziah it is said, 'that he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones, 2 Chron. xxvi. 15., so that it must needs be a mistake, to attribute the invention of the balista, the scorpio, or the onager, whereof Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxiii. c. 2., has given us the description, to the Greeks or Romans, because we find them made use of in the East before ever the Grecians had brought the

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beside grappling-hooks, and other instruments of war.

But his mind was so elated with the vanity of these preparations and designs, that his ambition for a transitory and earthly glory diverted his attention from blessings everlasting, and the worship and service of the Almighty; insomuch that he deviated from his integrity, after the example of his father, from a weakness of mind, that was not able to bear up against the tide of prosperity and success.

Uzziah, upon a solemn festival, dressed himself in a sacerdotal habit, and went into the holy temple to offer up incense to the Lord upon the golden altar; but Azariah the high-priest, with a train of fourscore priests with him, rushed into the temple, to the king, exclaiming against the wickedness of his usurpation, in breaking in upon an office belonging peculiarly to the priests of the race of Aaron; so that Azariah bade him immediately to depart, and not provoke the wrath of God by those indignities any longer.

The king felt indignant at this faithful remonstrance of the priests, and, burning with anger, threatened them with death if they should interpose. God, however, condescended to vindicate the sacredness of the sacerdotal office; for, the moment he lifted the censer, and was about to burn incense, he was struck with a leprosy,* which no art of man could ever after cure.

When the priests found the king was leprous, and that the Lord had smitten him, they admonished him to depart the city, as an unclean person, and not fit for common society.

The shame of lying under such a calamity had by this time in some measure humbled his pride; so that he submitted and obeyed; and when he had lived for some time a private life out of the city, Jotham his son taking upon him the administration of the government, his grief brought him at last to his grave, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and in the fifty-second of his reign; his body was buried in the field which contained the royal sepulchres, but at some distance from them, because he was a leper.

parted this world, and (as the Psalmist expresses it) become 'free among the dead,' Psal. lxxxviii. 5. But, besides the infliction of this disease Josephus tells us, "That, the very moment that Uzziah was going to burn incense, there happened a terrible earthquake, and, as the roof of the temple opened with the shock of it, there passed a beam of the sun through the cleft, which struck directly upon the face of this sacrilegious prince, whereupon he instantly became a leper: may, that this earthquake was so very violent, that it tore asunder a great mountain, towards the west of Jerusalem, and rolled one half of it over and over a matter of four furlongs, till at length it was stopped by another mountain, which stood over against it, but choked up the highway, and covered the king's gardens all over with dust." But all this may be justly suspected. That there was a great earthquake in the reign of Uzziah, is evident from the testimony of two prophets, Amos and Zechariah, but, that it happened exactly when Uzziah attempted this invasion of the priesthood, is far from being clear: on the contrary, if we will abide by Bishop Usher's computation, the Jewish historian must be sadly mistaken. For, since the prophet Amos tells us, that he began to prophesy two years before this earthquake happened, in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam the II., king of Israel; and since we may gather from the sacred history, that Jeroboam died two years before the birth of Jotham, the son of Uzziah; that Jeroboam died in the six and twentieth year of the said Uzziah, and Jotham his son was born in the three and twentieth year thereof, and yet was of age sufficient to be made regent of the kingdom when his father was thus struck with a leprosy, (which must have been several years after Jeroboam's death,) it must needs follow, that this earthquake could not happen at the time which Josephus assigns, but must have been much earlier Jewish Antiq. and Calmet's Commentary.

† While the chosen people of God were accus-

* The punishment for such, as would intrude into divine ministrations, was capital, we see; and therefore God smote Uzziah with such a disease as was a kind of death; because it separated the person that was afflicted with it from the commerce and society of men, even as if he were de-

military art to any great perfection. Uzziah was certainly the first inventor of them; and therefore it is said, that for these, and other warlike preparations, 'his name was spread abroad.' From this time they began to be employed both in attacking and defending towns; and therefore, we find the prophet Ezekiel describing the future sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre, where he makes mention of battering-rams, and engines of war, or, as it should be rendered machines of cords, which, in all probability, were what later ages called their balistæ and catapultæ.— Calmet.

Zechariah, the king of the Israelites, and the son of Jeroboam, in the seventh month of his reign was murdered by the treachery of one of his own domestics, named

tomed to honour, in a particular manner, the memory of those kings who had reigned over them with justice and clemency, they took care to stamp some mark of posthumous disgrace upon those who had left the world under their disapprobation. The sepulchres of the Jewish kings were at Jerusalem: where, in some appointed receptacle, the remains of their princes were deposited; and from the circumstance of these being the cemetery for successive rulers, it was said when one died and was buried there, that he was gathered to his fathers. But several instances occur in the history of the house of David, in which, on various accounts, they were denied the honour of being entombed with their ancestors, and were deposited in some other place in Jerusalem. To mark, per-haps, a greater degree of censure, they were taken to a small distance from Jerusalem, and laid in a private tomb. Uzziah, who had, by his presumptuous attempt to seize the office of the priesthood, which was reserved by an express law for the house of Aaron, provoked the wrath of heaven, and being punished for his temerity with a loathsome and incurable disease, 'was buried with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper.' was undoubtedly with a design to make a suitable impression on the mind of the reigning monarch, to guard him against the abuse of his power, and teach him respect for the feelings and sentiments of that people for whose benefit chiefly he was raised to the throne, that such a stigma was fixed upon the dust of his offending predecessors. He was, in this manner, restrained from evil, and excited to good, according as he was fearful of being execrated, or desirous of being honoured after his decease. This public mark of infamy was accordingly put on the conduct of Ahaz; 'They buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.' The Egyptians had a custom, in some measure similar to this, only it extended to persons of every rank and condition. As soon as a man died, he was ordered to be brought to trial; the public accuser was heard; if he proved that the deceased had led a bad life, his memory was condemned, and he was deprived of the honours of sepulture. Thus were the Egyptians affected by laws which extended even beyond the grave, and every one, struck with the disgrace inflicted on the dead person, was afraid to reflect dishonour on his own memory, and that of his family. But what was singular, the sovereign himself was not exempted from this public inquest when he died. The whole kingdom was interested in the lives and administration of their sovereigns, and as death terminated all their actions, it was then deemed for the welfare of the community that they should suffer an impartial scrutiny, by a public trial, as well as the meanest of their subjects. In consequence of this solemn investigation, some of them

Shallum, the son of Jabesh, who took possession of the government. It was ill got, and he lost it as ill, on the thirtieth day after seizing it.

Menahem had all that time the command of an army that was at Tirzah, and upon the news of what had befallen Zechariah, he marched with his troops to Samaria, where he fought and overthrew Shallum, put him to the sword, and afterward by his own authority took all the ensigns of royalty to himself, and exercised sovereign power. With this victorious army he marched to Tirzah, but the citizens having shut their gates upon him, and refused to admit him, he was so incensed against them, that he laid waste the whole country, and in the end took the town by assault, and put all to the sword without regard to age, sex, or condition; for he exercised that merciless rigour upon his own countrymen, that would have been unpardonable even towards the worst barbarians; indeed, his government was a constant scene of horror and confusion for the whole ten years of his reign over Israel.

He was threatened after this with an invasion by Pul,* the king of Assyria;

were not ranked among the honoured dead, and consequently were deprived of public burial. The custom was singular: the effect must have been powerful and influential. The most haughty despot, who might trample on laws human and divine in his life, saw by this rigorous inquiry, that at death he also should be doomed to infamy and execration. "What degree of conformity," says Mr Burder, "there was between the practice of the Israelites and the Egyptians, and with whom the custom first originated, may be difficult to ascertain and decide: but the latter appears to be founded on the same principle as that of the former; and as it is more circumstantially detailed, affords us an agreeable explanation of a rite but slightly mentioned in the scriptures."—Script. Illust.

* This is the first time that we find any mention made of the kingdom of Assyria, since the days of Nimrod, who erected a small principality there, Gen. x. 11. and Pul, or Phul, is the first monarch of that nation who invaded Israel, and began their transportation out of their country. Some are of op nion, that he was the same with Belesis, the governor of Babylon, who, together with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapalus, the last of the

ment, he came to a timely agreement with him, compounding for a thousand talents of silver, which he raised upon the people at fifty shekels a head.

He died soon after, and was buried at Samaria, leaving Pekahiah his son to succeed him. This prince inherited the inhumanity and ill-nature of his father, as well as the government; but his time was short; for, after two years' reign, he was cut to pieces, together with several of his friends, at a public feast, by the treasonous practice of Pekah the son of Remaliah, one of his tribunes; who seized upon the government, and reigned twenty years: leaving it a matter of doubt, whether he was more remarkable for his impiety to God or injustice towards men.

In the days of Pekah, Tiglath-pileser,* king of the Assyrians, invaded the Israel-

Assyrian monarchs, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans. Patrick seems to be confident in this: but according to Prideaux, Belesis was one generation later, and therefore it is supposed, that this Pul was the father of Sardanapalus, who was called Sardan, with the annexation of his father's name Pul, in the same manner as Merodach, king of Babylon, was called Merodach-baladan, because he was the son of Baladan. This Pul therefore was the same king of Assyria, who, when Jonah preached against Nineveh, gave great tokens of his humiliation and repentance. The only difficulty is, that he seems to have marched his army from Babylon, and not from Nineveh, and yet his son and successor, we find, lived at Nineveh: but then it is suggested, that, as the kings of Assyria resided sometimes at Babylon and sometimes at Ninevel, it is not improbable that Pul, to avoid the judgments which Jonah threatened against the latter, might remove to Babylon, where he resided the remaining part of his reign; and this made it so convenient for him to attack the Israelites on the other side of Jordan .- Prideaux's Connection, and Bedford's Scripture Chronology.

* He is supposed by some to have been the son and successor of Sardanapalus, who restored the kingdom of Assyria, and possessed it, after it had been dismembered by Belesis, and Arbaces; but Prideaux makes him to be the same with Ar-baces, by Ælian called Thilgamus, and by Castor, Ninus Junior; who, together with Belesis, headed the conspiracy against Sardanapalus, and fixed his royal seat at Nineveh, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings, as Belesis (who in scripture is likewise called Baladan, Isaiah xxxix. 1.) did his at Babylon, and there governed his new-erected empire for nmeteen years .- Prideaux's Connection.

but not daring to hazard an engage-lites; and after subduing the land of Gilead, and the country beyond Jordan, together with that part of Galilee that lies next it, as also all the land of Naphtali, he took the inhabitants prisoners, and carried them away into his own country.

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Jotham, the son of Uzziah, reigned in Jerusalem over the tribe of Judah; his mother was a native of that city, whose name was Jerusha. He was a prince famous for all excellent qualities and virtues, exemplary for his reverence to God, for his justice to men, and for the care he took of the commonwealth; making it his business to keep all things in order, and to rectify what he found amiss. He repaired the porches and galleries in the temple; made good the city walls, where they were falling to ruin; erected large and strong towers; brought the Ammonites under the contribution of a hundred talents a year, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley, and advanced the kingdom also to such a state, that the people were both happy at home, and formidable abroad.

In the reign of this prince there appeared a prophet, whose name was Nahum; + and he foretold the destruction of

⁺ Nahum describes himself as an Elkoshite: which some have considered as a patronymic expression, conceiving it to imply his being a descendant of Elkosha; but which is generally supposed to intimate that he was born at Elkosh, or Elkosha, a small village in Galilee, of which St Jerome professes to have seen the ruins. The illustrious prophecy foretelling the future downfall of the Assyrian empire, remarkably accom-plished in little more than a century after it was delivered, affords a signal evidence of the inspiration of Nahum; and a striking lesson of humility to human pride. It must have furnished much consolation to the tribes who were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, as well as to those of Benjamin and Judah; and all must have rejoiced with the hope of deliverance, to hear that their conquerors should in time be conquered, their city levelled to the dust, and their empire overturned. The book in which these interesting prophecies are contained, is justly considered by Bishop Lowth as a complete and perfect poem, of which the conduct and imagery are truly admirable. The fire, spirit, and sublimity of Nahum, are unequalled. His scenes are painted with great variety and splendonr. The opening of his works in which he describes the attributes of God, is an-

syrian empire, in the following manner: "The condition of Nineveh shall be like that of a fish-pool, in a violent agitation of the waters before a great wind. The people shall fly away before the storm, in trouble and confusion; calling out one to another, Stay and take your gold and your silver with you, and nobody shall mind it; for their lives shall be much dearer to them than their treasure. They shall have desperate factions and divisions among themselves; weeping and wailing, with the knocking of their knees, and death in their faces. What will become of the habitation of the lions and the dams of the lions' whelps? Nineveh, says the Lord, I will strike thee out from off the face of the earth, and put an end to the outrages of the wild beasts that thou hast sent into the world."

This is the sum and substance of the prophet's predictions concerning Nineveh, which were punctually fulfilled at the expiration of about a hundred and fifteen years.

Jotham died in the forty-first year of his life, and the sixteenth of his reign; and Ahaz in the course of hereditary right succeeded him. He was the most impious prince that ever sat upon that throne, both for his deviation from the laws of his country, and his idolatry in imitation of the kings of Israel. He built altars in Jerusalem; sacrificed to idols upon them, and his own son among the rest for a burnt-offering, after the manner of the

gust; and the preparations for the attack, as well as the destruction of Nineveh, are represented with singular effect. The art, with which the immediate destruction of the Assyrians under Sennacherib is intermingled with the future ruin of the empire, affords a very elegant specimen of the manner in which the prophets delight to introduce present and distant events under one point of

view. The allegorical pictures in his prophecy are remarkably beautiful. Neither history nor tradition furnishes us with any account of Nahum, or of the period of his death. His tomb, or pretended tomb, was formerly shown in a village named Bethogabra, now called Giblin, near Em-

maus.—Dr Gray.

Nineveh, and the subversion of the Assyrian empire, in the following manner: as enormous as these.

While Ahaz persisted in these wicked courses, Rezin the king of Damascus, and Pekah the king of the Israelites, being joined in a league, marched together, with their united forces, and invested that famous city of Jerusalem. But the place

* Few things are more shocking to the ears of humanity than the frequent mention, in the sacred scriptures, of the custom of causing children, &c. to pass through fire, in honour of Molech; a custom, the antiquity of which appears from its being repeatedly forbidden by Moses; as Lev. xviii. 21, and afterwards in chapter xx, where the expression is very strong of 'giving his seed to Molech.' The Rabbins have histories of the manner of passing through the fires, or between the fires, or into caves of fire. And there is an account of an image, which received children into its arms, and let them drop into a fire beneath; and of the shouts of the multitude, the noise of drums, &c. to drown the shrieks of the agonizing infant, and the horrors of the parents' mind Waving all allusion to these at present, the following extract may give us a good idea, in what manner the passing through or over fire was anciently performed: "A still more astonishing instance of the superstition of the ancient Indians, in respect to their venerated fire, remains, at this day, in the grand annual festival, holden in honour of Darma Rajah, and called the feast of fire; in which, as in the ancient rites of Molech, the devotees walk barefoot over a glowing fire, extending forty feet. It is called the feast of fire, because they then walk on that element. It lasts eighteen days, during which those who make a vow to keep it, must fast, lie on the bare ground, and walk on a brisk fire. The eighteenth day they assemble, with the sound of instruments, their heads crowned with flowers, the body bedaubed with saffron; and follow in cadence the figures of Darma Rajah, and of Drobede his wife, who are carried there in procession; when they come to the fire, they stir it, to animate its activity, and take a little of the ashes, with which they rub their foreheads; and when the gods have been three times round it, they walk either fast or slow, according to their zeal, over a very hot fire, extended to about forty feet in length. Some carry their children in their arms; and others lances, sabres, and standards"—Sonnerat's Travels. This extract accounts for several expressions used in scripture; such as, causing children (very young perhaps) to pass through fire, as we see they are carried over the fire, by which means they were not destroyed or injured, except by being profaned. Nevertheless it might, and probably did, happen, that some of those, who thus passed, were hurt or maimed in the passing; or, if not immediately slain by the fire, might actually be burnt in this superstitious pilgrimage, so as to contract fatal diseases .- Fragments, Appendix to Calmet.

was so well fortified, that they were forced to raise the siege, and quit it.

In the mean time, the king of Syria possessed himself of the city of Elath by the Red sea, put all the inhabitants to the sword, and introduced a colony of Syrians into their places. He possessed himself after this of several castles and strong holds; did terrible execution upon the Jews, and so, with a prodigious booty, marched his army back again to Damascus.

When the king of Jerusalem came to understand that the Syrians were departed, he thought himself able to cope with the king of Israel, and drew out an army against him; but his wickedness was so great, that God in just indignation gave the victory to his enemy, with the loss of a hundred and twenty thousand of his men.

In the same battle, Zichri, the general of the Israelites, killed Maaseiah, the son of Ahaz, in a single encounter, and slew also Azrikam the captain of the guards; taking Elkanah, the general of the Jewish troops, prisoner; beside an infinite number of captives of the Benjamites, whom they carried away together with the spoil to Samaria.

There was at that time a prophet in Samaria, whose name was Obed, who went out of the town to meet the army in their return, crying out to them with a loud voice, that they were not to look upon this victory as gained by their own virtue and valour, but as a judgment from heaven upon king Ahaz. The prophet therefore told them, they were to blame not to rest satisfied with the success of their undertaking, without making slaves of their kindred and relations of the two tribes; advising them by all means to set them at liberty, and send them home again, without offering any indignity to their persons, upon the peril of falling under God's displeasure.

The Israelites upon this occasion called a council to deliberate on the best measures that could be pursued, in consequence of the prophet's warning, when Berechiah, a man of great authority in the assembly, with three more, declared themselves utterly against the bringing any of the prisoners into the town, for fear God's vengeance should fall upon all the rest. Adding, moreover, that they already had many heinous transgressions alleged against them, and therefore needed not to aggravate the charge.

The soldiers were so far wrought upon by this consideration, that they gave their prisoners liberty to go whither they would, and take what they would with them; whereupon four persons were appointed to set them free, take care of their persons, furnish them with provisions for their journey, and bear them company beyond Jericho. When they had brought them on their way within a little of Jerusalem, they returned to Samaria.

CHAPTER V.

Cruelty and impiety of Ahaz, who dies, and is succeeded by his son Hezekiah .- Restoration of the true worship, and defeat of the Philistines .- Samaria taken by assault .- Idolatry punished by a dreadful pestilence .- A new colony is planted in Samaria.

THE fatal overthrow Ahaz sustained from the Israelites, obliged him to call in the aid of foreign powers. Accordingly he sent an embassy to Tiglath-pileser, the king of the Assyrians, with promises of great sums of money, and magnificent presents, desiring succours from him against the Israelites, and those of Syria and Damascus.

This prince no sooner heard the desire and proposal of Ahaz, than he marched directly to his aid, laying the country of Syria waste, taking Damascus by assault, and putting king Rezin to the sword.

The people of Damascus he transplanted to the Upper Media, and supplied their places at Damascus with colonies of his own people. He then depopulated great part of the land of Israel, carrying away vast numbers of them prisoners.

took all the gold and silver out of the king's treasury, and that likewise out of the temple, with all the rich donations, and carried the whole along with him to Damascus; which, according to his agreement, he delivered up to the king of Assyria, with acknowledgments for the fayour of his relief, and then returned to Jerusalem.

Now this king had so little sense, either of honour or reason, that the mortal enmity between him and the Syrians did not hinder him from worshipping their gods, and joining in their ceremonies; vainly persuading himself, from his blind zeal in idolatrous worship, that they would be propitious to his arms; and then, when he was overcome, on the other hand, his business was to make friends of the gods of the Assyrians; indeed, he was prone to fall into every idolatrous abomination by the neglect of the worship of the true God, and in opposition to the profession and practice of his ancestors.

This apostasy drew down the wrath and vengeance of God upon him. Nav, the contempt and aversion that he had for the honour and service of God, were so extravagant, that after he had rifled the temple he commanded the very doors to be kept shut, out of enmity to God and goodness, and to prevent the celebrating of any act of religious worship in that holy place. But at last, after a constant course of impiety, he departed this life at thirty-six years of age, and in the sixteenth of his reign, leaving his son Hezekiah his successor to the government.

About this time Pekah king of Israel lost both his government and his life by the treachery of a court-confidant, called Hoshea, * who enjoyed the fruit of his

Having thus harassed the Syrians, Ahaz violence and usurpation for the space of nine years. He was one of the worst of men, that in his life and conversation showed not the least thought or belief of a God. Shalmaneser, the king of the Assyrians, led an army against him, and being cast off by God, whom he himself had rejected and despised, he was easily overcome, and forced to submit to the terms of a tributary.

In the third year of Hoshea's reign, Hezekiah came to be king of Jerusalem, He was a person endowed with an excellent understanding, and a lover and practiser of piety and justice; the first thing he did upon his coming to the throne, was to provide for the comfort of his people, introducing the religion of the only true God; to this end, he immediately summoned a meeting of the priests and Levites, and addressed them to this effect. "I need not remind you of the many and great calamities that have befallen you for the iniquities of my father, in not rendering to God the honour due to him, and for the madness of your being prevailed upon to pay divine adoration to his idols; wherefore being now taught by woful experience how dangerous a thing it is to prevaricate with the Almighty, it is my advice, that all past miscarriages may be forgotten, and that you purify and purge yourselves, together with the priests and Levites, from all your former pollutions; and after that preparation, that you set

ner, and yet his character in scripture is not so vile as many of his predecessors, 2 Kings xvii. 2. For, whereas the kings of Israel had hitherto maintained guards upon the frontiers to hinder their subjects from going to Jerusalem to worship, Hoshea took away these guards and gave free liberty to all to go and pay their adorations where the law had directed. And therefore, when Hezekiah invited all Israel to come to his passover, this prince permitted all that would to go; and when, upon their return from that festival, they destroyed all the monuments of idolatry that were found in the kingdom of Samaria, instead of forbidding them, in all probability he gave his consent to it; because without some tacit encouragement at least, they durst not have ventured to do it .- Prideaux's

^{*} After he had murdered his predecessor Pekah, the elders of the land seem to have taken the government into their own hands; for he had not the possession of the kingdom till the latter end of the twelfth year of Ahaz, i. c. about nine years after he had committed the fact. He came to the rown, it must be owned, in a very wicked man- Connection.

open the doors of that holy place; and when you shall have restored it to its original purity, by consecrations, expiatory lustrations, and sacrifices in form, we may then promise ourselves that God will pardon our impleties, and prosper us in all our undertakings.

The priests were so encouraged by this advice of the king, that they presently opened the temple, cleared it of all impurities, made ready the holy vessels, and laid their sacrifices upon the altar, according to the Jewish manner.

The king, in the mean time, sent messengers throughout all his dominions to summon the people up to Jerusalem to the feast of unleavened bread; which had been then a long time intermitted, through the impious neglect of former kings; exhorting and inviting the Israelites also to forsake the practice of their idolatrous superstitions, and return to the exercise of the true religion, and to the worship of the true God; promising them that they should have liberty to come and go, and to celebrate this festival in common with his own people. The king observed, that it was not for his own sake, but for theirs, that he gave them this invitation; and that they themselves should reap the benefit, if they followed his counsel.

But when the Israelites heard the message, they were so far from giving any heed to it, that they held the messengers in derision, and treated the prophets with contempt, for the good office of advising them to return to their duty, and foretelling them the miseries that should befall them, without a timely repentance. Thus they proceeded from one wickedness to another, till God in his wrath avenged himself upon them for their impiety, by delivering them up into the hands of their ene-But there were great numbers yet of the tribes of Manasseh, Zebulun, and Issachar, whose hearts were touched with this advice of the prophets, and who went up to Hezekiah at Jerusalem, to worship.

When the multitude was assembled

there, the king went up to the temple, together with the princes and the people, where he sacrificed for himself seven bulls, seven rams, and as many goats; and when he had first laid his hands upon the heads of the victims, both the king and the princes left the execution to the priests, who cut the throats of the sacrifices, and burnt them whole, the Levites standing in a ring about them, singing hymns, and accompanying their voices with musical instruments, as David had prescribed them of old, the rest of the priests joining in the concert. When this was over, the king and the people cast themselves prostrate, and worshipped the Lord.

Hezekiah sacrificed, after this, seventy bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; bestowing also six hundred bullocks, and three thousand other cattle, as a bounty for the entertainment of the people; and when the priests had performed their office, according to the customary method, the king himself feasted with the people, and joined with them in praises and thanksgivings.

The feast of unleavened bread was now coming on, and in the time of their preparations for the feast of the passover, they offered up a course of other sacrifices, for seven days successively, and the king bestowed upon the people, out of his own bounty, two thousand bulls, and seven thousand of other cattle, over and above their own number. The princes likewise, after Hezekiah's example, super-adding a thousand bulls, and a thousand and forty other beasts; insomuch, that from the days of Solomon down to that time, there was never such a solemnity known to be so splendidly celebrated. As soon as this festival was over, they made it their next work to purge the whole country, having first purified Jerusalem itself from the abomination of their idols.

Nay, there was one thing, namely, the brazen serpent,* which might have been

^{*} The reason, which the scripture assigns for

ron's rod, for a monument of God's miraculous mercy to the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness; but because the preceding times of iniquity had made it an object of idolatrous worship, Hezekiah thought proper to destroy it, in order to take away all occasion of the like abuse for the future.

The king then appointed daily sacri-

Hezekiah's destroying this brazen serpent, is, *Because, unto this day, the children of Israel had burnt incense to it, 2 Kings xviii. 4. We are not however to suppose, that, all along from the days of Moses, this brazen serpent: was made an object of religious worship: this is what neither David, nor Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, would have allowed of; nor can we think, but that either Asa, or Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry would have made an end of this, had they perceived that the people at that time either paid worship or burnt incense to it. The commencement of this superstition therefore must be of a later date, and since the time that Ahab's family, by being allied to the crown of Judah by marriage, introduced all kinds of idolatry. Now one false inducement to the worship of this image might be a mistake of the words of Moses. For, whereas it is said, that 'whosoever looketh upon it, shall live,' Numb. xxi. 8. some might thence fancy, that, by its mediation they might obtain a blessing, and so make it the object of their superstition at first, However, we may imagine that their burning inrense, or any other perfumes before it, was designed only in honour to the true God, by whose direction Moses made it; but then, in process of their superstition, they either worshipped the God of Israel under that image, or (what is worse) substituted a heathen god in his room, and worshipped the brazen serpent as his image; which they might more easily be induced to do, because the practice of some neighbouring nations was to worship their gods under the form of a serpent. Upon this account Hezekiah wisely chose rather to lose this memorial of God's wonderful mercy to his people in the wilderness, than to suffer it any longer to be abused to idolatry, and therefore he brake it in pieces, i. e. as the Talmudists explain it, he ground it to powder, and then scattered it in the air, that there might not be the least remains of it. And yet, notwithstanding all the care which he took to destroy it, Sigonius, in his history of Italy, tells us, that, in the church of St Ambrose, in Milan, they show to their devotees a brazen serpent which they pretend to be the very same which Moses erected in the wilderness, and, upon this belief, an idolatrous devotion is there paid to it as gross as was that of the Jews; though, it must be owned, that, among their learned men there are some who acknowledge the cheat, and disclaim it. -Le Clerc's Commentary, and Prideaux's Connection.

of innocent use, and served, in the same | fices, according to the law, to be supplied manner as did the pot of manna, and Aa- out of his own stores, and commanded the people to present the priests and Levites with their tenths and first-fruits, that they might not be taken off by any common business from their attendance upon the

> By this means they were abundantly furnished with all sorts of fruits and provisions. The king also ordered the building of granaries and store-houses, for the common use and service of themselves, their wives, and children, to be distributed in proportion to their shares; so that by these degrees, the ancient discipline came in some measure to be restored.

Having thus revived the worship of God, and extirpated idolatry throughout his dominions, the king made war upon the Philistines, and over-ran their country, subduing all their cities, from Gath to Gaza, which he added to his territories.

When the king of Assyria sent a message to him to demand the tribute from him, which was formerly paid him by his father, with a menace, in case of refusal, to take his country from him; Hezekiah, depending upon the goodness of God, the consciousness of his integrity, and the veracity of the prophet Isaiah, from whom he was sure to be forewarned of the event of things, that he gave no heed to the menaces of the Assyrians.

Upon intelligence being given to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, that the king of Israel was entered into a secret treaty with So, * king of Egypt, to join in an alliance against him, the Assyrian, in a furious indignation, immediately marched with his army against Samaria.

In the third year of the siege, and in the ninth of the reign of that king, he

^{*} This So, with whom Hoshea entered into confederacy, is in profane authors called Sabacon, that famous Ethiopian, mentioned by Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus, who in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign invaded Egypt, and having taken Bocharis, the king thereof, prisoner, had him, in great cruelty, burnt alive, and then seized on his kingdom. Prideaux's Connection.

took it by assault, in the seventh year of the reign of Hezekiah king of Jerusalem.

The loss of this place was the final ruin of the kingdom of Israel; the people were all transplanted into Media and Persia, and Hoshea the king taken with them alive; while the king of Assyria brought others from thence in exchange, as far as Cuthah, a river of Persia, to re-people the land of the Israelites and plant them in Samaria.*

* Sir William Jones inclines to the opinion that

Cashmire, and such opinion derives support

the ten tribes migrated to India, about Thibet,

several circumstances. In the year 1828 the following statement appeared in the German papers. "Leipsig, June 30.—After having seen for some years past merchants from Tiflis, Persia, and Armenia, among the visitors at our fair, we have had, for the first time, two traders from Bucharia, with shawls, which are there manufactured of the finest wool of the goats of Thibet and Cashmire, by the Jewish families, who form a third part of the population. In Bucharia, formerly the capital of Sogdiana, the Jews have been very numerous ever since the Babylonian captivity, and are there as remarkable for their industry and manufactures as they are in England for their money transactions. It was not till last year that the Russian government succeeded in extending its diplomatic missions far into Bucharia. The above traders exchanged their shawls for coarse and fine woollen cloths of such colours as are most esteemed in the East." The number of these Jews must be very great, if this account be at all correct, as to the proportion which they bear to the whole population, this being stated by the most accurately informed writers to be from 15,000,000, to 18,000,000. But this information is confirmed, in a very satisfactory manner, from other sources. In the year 1822, a Mr Sargon, one of the agents, we believe, to the London Society for converting the Jews, communicated to England some interesting accounts of a number of persons resident at Bombay, Cannanore, and the vicinity, who were evidently the descendants of Jews, calling themselves Beni-Israel, and bearing, almost uniformly, Jewish names, but with a Persian

termination. Feeling very desirous to obtain all possible knowledge of their condition, Mr Sargon undertook a mission to Cannanore for this purpose,

and the result of his inquiries was a conviction, and they were not Jews of the one tribe and a half, being of a different race from the white and black Jews at Cochin, and consequently that they were a remnant of the long lost ten tribes. He

also concluded, from the information obtained respecting the Beni-Israel, that they existed in

great numbers in countries between Cochin and

Bombay, the north of Persia, among the hordes of Tartary, and in Cashmire; the very countries in which the German accounts state the recent discovery to have been made. So far, then, these

This transportation of the ten tribes from the place of their abode, fell out nine hundred and forty-seven years from the coming of their forefathers out of the land

accounts confirm each other, and there is every probability that the Beni-Israel, resident on the west of the Indian peninsula, had originally proceeded from Bucharia. It will therefore be interesting to know something of their moral and religious character; and we have collected the following particulars from Mr Sargon's accounts: 1. In dress, and manners they resemble the natives so as not to be distinguished from them, but by attentive observation and inquiry. 2. They have Hebrew names of the same kind, and with the same local termination, as the Sepoys in the of them read Hebrew, and they have a faint tradi-tion of the cause of their original exodus from Egypt. 4. Their common language is the Hin-doo. 5. They keep idols and worship them, and use idolatrous ceremonies intermixed with Hebrew. 6. They circumcise their own children. 7. They observe the Kippoor, or great expiation day of the Hebrews, but not the sabbath, or any feast or fast-days. 8. They call themselves Gorah Jehudi, or white Jews; and they term the black Jews, Collah Jehudi. 9. They speak of the Arabian Jews as their brethren, but do not acknowledge the European Jews as such, because they are of a fairer complexion than themselves. 10. They use on all occasions, and at the most trivial circumstances, the usual Jewish prayer, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' 11. They have no cohen (priest) Levite, or kasi, among them, under those terms, but they have a kasy, (reader,) who performs prayers and conducts their religious ceremonies, and they appear to have elders and a chief in each community, who determine in their religious concerns. 12. They expect the Messiah soon to arrive, and rejoice in the belief that at Jerusalem they will see their God, worship him only, and be despised no more. This is all the information that can be collected from Mr Sargon's accounts, but the very region in which these people have been discovered, has been described by the celebrated Oriental geographer, Ibn Haukal, with great minuteness, under the appellation of Mawer-al-nahr. He speaks of it as one of the most flourishing provinces within the regions of Islam, and describes its inhabitants as a people of probity and virtue, averse from evil, and fond of peace. "Such is their liberality, that no one turns aside from the rites of hospitality; so that a person contemplating them in this light, would imagine that all the families in the land were but one house. When a traveller arrives there, every person endeavours to attract him to himself, that he may have opportunities of person light of the state of the forming kind offices for the stranger; and the best proof of their hospitable and generous disposition is, that every peasant, though possessing but a bare sufficiency, allows a portion of his cottage for the reception of his guest. Thus in acts of hospitality they expend their income. Never have I heard of such things in any other country . . You cannot

of Egypt, to their taking possession of that land before, by force of arms; eight hundred years from the days of Joshua, and two hundred and fifty-six years, seven months, after the revolt from Rehoboam, the grandson of David, to Jeroboam.*

This was the miserable end of that stiffnecked people, that would neither be subject to laws, nor hearken to the voice and precautions of their prophets, though they foretold them, that their certain destruction was at hand, unless they departed from their evil ways.

These calamities arose from that seditious revolt from Rehoboam, in advancing a servant over the head of his master; who, in contempt of God, and his holy laws, drew the indignation of heaven upon the people, by drawing them to the practice of the same abominations by his example; but he escaped not the just judgment of God.

The king of Assyria carried all before him, and extended his victorious arms throughout Syria and Phœnicia.†

see any town or stage, or even desert, without a convenient inn or stage-house, for the accommodation of travellers, with every thing necessary. I have heard that there are above 2000 nebats or inns where as many persons as may arrive shall find sufficient forage for their beasts, and meat for themselves."—See Calmet.

* Here ended the kingdom of the ten tribes, after it had subsisted two lundred and fifty-six years and seven months: for Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, reigned 22 years, in which 2 years of Nadabare comprehended, Baasha reigned 24 years, Elah 2, Omri 12, in which 7 days of Zimri are contained, Ahab 22, Ahaziah 2, Jehoram 12, Jehu 28, Jehoahaz 17, Joash 16, Jeroboam 11. 41, the throne vacant 11, Zechariah 6 months, Shallum 1 month, Menahem 10 years, Pekah 20, the kingdom administered by elders 8 years, and Hoshea, the son of Elah reigned 9 years. The particulars are evident from the above history, and the whole makes up the duration of this kingdom 256 years 7 months.

† In Menander's Tyrian annals, some account is given of this expedition of the Assyrian king into Phœnicia. It appears that Elulæus, who was then king of Tyre, seeing the Philistines brought low by the war which Hezekiah had lately made upon them, laid hold of this opportunity of reducing Gath again under his obedience, which had some time before revolted from him. Whereupon the Gittites, applying themselves to Shalmaneser, engaged him in their cause; so that he marched with his whole army against the Tyrians. Conse-

The new-comers in Samaria were called Cuthites, from a country of Persia of that name, and from the river Cuthah, from whence they had their original. There were five nations of them, and they brought as many of their own country gods with them,‡ highly provoking the

quent on this expedition, Sidon, Akko, (afterward called Ptolemais. and now Acre), and the other maritime towns of Phœnicia which had till then been subject to the Tyrians, revolted from them, and submitted to Shalmaneser. But the Tyrians having, in a sea-fight with twelve ships only, beaten the Assyrian and Phænician fleets both joined together, which consisted of sixty ships, this gave them such a reputation in naval affairs, and made their name so terrible in this sort of war, that Shalmaneser would not venture to cope with them any more at sea; but turning the war into a siege, left an army to block up the city, and returned into Assyria. The forces which he left there much distressed the place, by stopping their aqueducts, and cutting off all the conveyances of water to them. To relieve themselves in this exigency, they digged wells, and by this supply they were enabled to hold out five years; at the end of which, Shalmaneser dying, the siege was raised, and the place relieved .-Prideaux.

I The false deities brought into Samaria, are thus mentioned in the sacred volume: 'The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.' Little can with certainty be known about these impure gods except their names; and therefore it is difficult, and has afforded a large field for conjecture, to give any satisfactory account of them.—Succoth benoth properly signifies the 'tabernacles of daughters.' Benoth or Venoth, and Venus have a great affinity, the initial letter being easily interchanged; and there is no room to doubt that these Succoth were tents or booths, wherein young women exposed themselves to prostitution in honour of the Babylonish goddess Mylitta, or Venus. Herodotus gives us a particular account of this detestable service. "There is," says he, "an abominable custom among the Babylonians that all their women are obliged once in their life to prostitute themselves to strangers at the temple of Venus. Those who are rich, and so dis dain to mingle with the crowd, present themselves before the temple in covered chariots, attended by a numerous train of domestics, But the generality of the women sit in the temple, having garlands upon their heads, and holding a cord, some coming out, others going in. The cords are held by them in such a manner as to afford a free passage among the women, that the strangers may choose whom they like. A woman who has once seated herself in this place must not return home till some stranger has thrown a piece of money into her lap, and led her from the temple and defiled her. It

true and great God against them, for the worship they paid to the idols; so that they were visited with so dreadful a plague, that the place was almost depopulated.

is usual for the stranger who gives the money to say 'May the goddess Mylitta be auspicious to It is unlawful to refuse the money, however small the sum may be, because it is applied to sacred uses. The woman must follow the first stranger that offers her money, having no liberty to reject him; and having duly honoured the goddess, she returns to her own house." These passages may explain what we read in the book of Barnch respecting the idolatry of the Chaldeans and Babylonians: 'the women, surrounded with lines, sit in the way burning their chaff, and when any of them is pitched on by a passenger to lie with him, she upbraids her neighbour that she had not the same honov- done her, and that her line was not broke.' Thus they and that her line was not broke.' gloried in their shame. The same impure rites were also practised in other parts, as at Sicca Veneria, the name of a city in Numidia, not far from the borders of Africa Propria; and at Corinth, where was a temple of Venus, at which the Corinthians had consecrated a thousand courtesans, who sold themselves at a dear rate. was the Succoth-benoth, the daughters of the tabernacles among the heathens, or the Babylonian Venus, and these the abominable rites of their superstition .- Nergal seems to have been the sun, as the causer of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the planets; the word being derived from Ner, which signifies light, and Gal, signifying to revolve. The Rabbins tell us that this idol was represented in the shape of a cock; and though their authority is not always satisfactory, in this instance they Among the latter heathens, seem to be correct. we find the cock was sacred to Apollo or the sun; "because," says Heliodorus, speaking of the times when cocks crow, "by a natural sensation of the sun's revolution to us, they are incited to salute the god." And perhaps under the name Nergal they meant to worship the sun, not only for the diurnal return of its light upon the earth, but also for its annual return or revolution. We may observe the emblem, a cock, is affected by the latter as well as by the former, and is frequently crowing both day and night, when the days begin to lengthen.—Ashima, the idol of the men of Hamath, is represented by some of the Rabbins in the shape of an ape; others, in that of a lamb, a goat, or a satyr. Jurieu thinks it may be derived from Esh-maja, the fire of heaven, or Esh-joma, a daily fire; both of which signify the sun, of which the fire is an emblem; and it is well known that the sun and fire were the emblems of those countries from which these men had been removed,having come from Emesa, a province of Syria which lies upon the river Orontes. Others again derive the word from the Persian Asuman, the name of an angel or geni, who, according to the ancient Magi of Persia, presides over the 27th day the Moloch of the Ammonites.—See of every solar month in the Persian year; which Clarke, Millar, Calmet, and Parkhurst.

Having used divers means to avert this dreadful judgment, they were at length advised by the oracle to have recourse to the worship of the great God, as the only means of finding relief for their calamity.

therefore is called by the name of this geni. Magi believe Asuman to be the angel of death, which separates the souls of men from their bodies .- Nibhaz, according to the Rabbins, is represented in the form of a dog, somewhat resembling the Anubis of the Egyptians. Pierius, in his Hieroglyphics, shows us that the cunocephalus, (a kind of ape, with the head of a dog, standing upon his hinder feet,) was an animal eminently sacred amongst the Egyptians, hieroglyphical of the moon, and kept in their temple to inform them of the moon's conjunction with the sun, at which time this animal is strangely affected, being deprived of sight, refusing food, and lying sick on the ground; but, on the moon's appearance, seeming to return thanks, and congratulate the return of light both to himself and her. This being observed, the word nibchaz gives us reason to conclude, that this idol was in the shape of a dog looking, barking, or howling at the moon.-Parkhurst is of opinion that Tartak is compounded of Tar, 'to go round,' and Rathak, 'to chain, tether;' and plainly denotes the heavens, considered as confining the planets in their respective orbits, as if they were tethered. The Jews have a tradition that the emblem of this idol was an ass; which, considering the propriety of that animal, when tethered, to represent this idol, is not improbable; and from this idolatrous worship of the Samaritans, joined perhaps with some confused account of the cherubim, seems to have sprung that stupid story of the heathens, that the Jews had an ass's head in their holy of holies, to which they paid religious worship. Jurieu is of opinion that as the word Nibhaz, both in the Hebrewand Chaldee, with a small variation, denotes quick, swift, rapid; and Tartak in the same language signifies a chariot, these two idols, when conjoined, may denominate the sun mounted on his car .- Adrammelech, the Rabbins say, was represented under the form of a mule; but Calmet thinks there is much more reason to believe that he represented the sun. Mr Taylor supposes the name to be derived from the gorgeous robe which adorned his image; if it be not rather an epithet given first by poetical imagination, and afterwards adopted by the royal worshippers, as well-expressing the god adored in their sumptuous palace, where he might be superbly lodged, q. d. 'the king of splendours.' Taylor further suggests that as Adrammelech signifies the sun, so Ananmelech may indicate the moon or gentle king. The name, he remarks, may be composed of Onan, a cloud, and Melek, a king; 'the king of clouds. Perhaps the distinguishing symbol of this idol was a cloud of gold, or some other splendid material, annexed to its statue. Locke is of opinion that the names of these two idols were expressive of one and the same deity; and as the children were offered to him, it appears he was the same with the Moloch of the Ammonites.—See Dr A.

The people immediately upon this sent for commissioners to attend the king of Assyria with a petition that he would be pleased to send them some of the priests that were carried away captives with the Israelites.

This being granted as they desired, they had the law of Moses read, with an explication upon the practice, and the reason of their religion and discipline, which had so wonderful an effect upon them, that they gave themselves wholly up to the study and exercise of it; and soon after this the pestilence ceased.*

CHAPTER VI.

Sennacherib king of Assyria makes war upon Hezekiah; receives conditions from him to withdraw his army.—Breaks his articles.—Hezekiah is distressed.—Applies to the prophet Isaiah, who promises him relief.—Blasphemy of Sennacherib.—Prayer of Hezekiah.—He receives a message of his death, obtains a reprieve by a signal from heaven, and afterwards pays the debt of nature.

In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah king of the two tribes, Sennacherib the king of Assyria marched against him, with a powerful and well-disciplined army. Having taken all the cities of Judah and Benjamin by assault, he was now ready to advance towards Jerusalem, when an embassy came to him with an offer of submission and paying him tribute.

Sennacherib gave the ambassadors audience, resolved immediately to desist from the war, and to treat upon the king's terms, promising upon oath, that upon the receipt of three hundred talents of silver,

and thirty of gold, he would depart with his army, without attempting any act a hostility. Hezekiah, upon this assurance, emptied all the treasuries, and sent him the money, in confidence of the enemy's departure, according to his oath, and that he might reign afterward without any difficulty or danger. The king of Assyria took the money, but broke his word; for he marched himself with his troops against the Egyptians, and left Rabshakeh lieutenant-general, with Tartan, and Rabsaris, to carry on the war against Jerusalem.

Upon the drawing up of the army, they pitched their camp within sight of the walls of the town; and by a messenger summoned Hezekiah out to a parley. Hezekiah was not willing to trust himself out; and therefore sent three of his particular friends to supply his place: Eliakim, his deputy governor; and Shebnah and Joah, keepers of the records.

Upon their coming out of the town, and presenting themselves before the officers of the Assyrian army, Rabshakeh, with an imperious tone, bade them carry their master this message: "That the great king Sennacherib would fain know what confidence he valued himself upon, that he should dare to make any great difficulty of owning that great king for his

^{*} The people of that country retained long since the name of Cuthites, among the Hebrews; but the Greeks call them Samaritans. They were a people unfixed and changeable in their opinions and inclinations, accommodating themselves to the present time and occasion. So long as the Jews were prosperous, 'We are all of one blood,' they cried, 'and of the lineage of Joseph;' but if they happened to fall under any affliction, or adversity, 'Alas!' said they, 'we have nothing to do with them, they are strangers to us; we came a great way off.'

[†] Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh are not the proper names of these men, but rather denote their employments and offices. Tartan signifies the president of the customs; Rabsaris, the chief eunuch; and Rabshakeh, the principal cup-bearer; and because he spake Hebrew with some fluency, the Rabbins are generally of opinion that he was either an apostate Jew, or one of the captivity of Israel. It is certain that he was a very eloquent man, and his speech very excellently calculated to raise sedition of defection among the besieged; but that a person of his education should be versed in the Phænician, which is, in a manner, the same with the Hebrew language, is no wonder at all. Moreover, had he been a Jew, (though an apostate) he should have known better, one would think, than to have upbraided Hezekiali with acting according to the law, under which he lived, in destroying the groves and altars of idols, and in requiring his subjects to worship God in Jerusalem only.—Le Clerc's Commentary.

master, and refuse entrance to his army the country, in token of his humiliation, into the city? Does he flatter himself with hope of relief from Egypt, as if they were in a condition to cope with the army of my master? It is the height of frenzy to imagine it, and thereby trust for success to that which will prove inevitably his very bane and ruin. You should inform your master, that this expedition is not: attempted without God's holy will and direction, who will as certainly give the king of Assyria victory over Hezekiah and his subjects, as he hath given him victory, over the Israelites."

Rabshakelı delivered himself in Hebrew, being a language he was versed in. But Eliakim, fearing the effect such a discourse in a known tongue might have upon the multitude, desired him rather to speak Syriac. Rabshakeh, understanding the cause of Eliakim's fear, raised his voice, and continued his discourse in Hebrew to this purpose: "Let your people hear, and understand the commands of my master; for it concerns them so to do, and to render themselves subservient. It is the business, I know, both of yourselves and of your king, to seduce your people with vain and empty hopes of defending themselves by force; but if you have courage to put it to a hazard, or any sort of pretence to beat off this army from your walls, I am ready to furnish you with two thousand horse, if you will undertake to find riders. But, you have no riders to try the experiment. If it be so, why are you then so long deliberating upon a thing you will be compelled to do in the conclusion? especially in a case where you are safe if you do it willingly, and in which you run the most imminent hazard if you stay till compelled; as the weaker must of necessity yield at last to the stronger."

This was spoken in the hearing, as well of the people as of the deputies; and no sooner was it brought to the king's ear, than he divested himself of his royal robes, and put on sackcloth, after the custom of casting himself prostrate upon the ground, and imploring the aid and favour of Almighty God, being persuaded that la could derive relief from no other source than the divine protection.

He sent likewise some of his particular friends, together with others of the priesthood, to the prophet Isaiah, desiring that he would intercede with the Lord, by prayers and sacrifices, for the common safety, and for the interposition of Providence in behalf of his people.

The prophet complied with the king's request, and succeeded so far in his mediation, that he was authorized by a divine revelation to bid the king and his friends be of good courage; for the enemy should be overcome without a battle, and abandon his design with loss and disgrace; that his pride should be humbled, and that the hand of the Almighty should be upon him to his ruin; that Sennacherib himself should miscarry in his Egyptian expedition, and upon that disappointment return home, where he should fall by the sword.

Immediately after these encouraging declarations of the prophet, Hezekiah received letters from the king of Assyria, with insolent expostulations on his folly and presumption, in thinking himself capable of maintaining his liberty against the power of a prince who had already subjected so many warlike nations to his obedience, concluding with a menace of putting man, woman, and child to the sword, if they did not without delay set open their city gates, and give a free entrance to his army.

Hezekiah, relying upon the truth of the divine word, and the power of an Almighty arm, paid no regard to the threats of his enemy; but betook himself to prayer and supplication for the protection of the city, till the prophet Isaiah returned him an answer, that his petition was heard, and that the danger was over for any harm the Assyrians should do them upon that undertaking. He told them likewise,

that there were happier times at hand, wherein they should live in peace and security upon their own lands and possessions, without fear of an enemy. process of time the king of Assyria, finding all his attempts frustrated, and that nothing succeeded with him, withdrew his army, and went back to Nineveh.

He had spent much time before Pelusium; and at last, when he had brought up his platforms within a little of the top of the walls, and was upon the very point of giving the assault, news was brought him, that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, was upon his march, and approaching with a great reinforcement to assist the Egyptians; and that he took his route through the desert, with a design to fall upon the Assyrians by surprise. Sennacherib was so alarmed at this report, that he immediately drew off his army.

Sennacherib, at his return from the Egyptian war, found his army that he had left under the command of Rabshakeh almost destroyed by a judicial pestilence, which swept away, in general, officers, tribunes, and common soldiers, to the number of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, the first night they sat down before the city.*

This dreadful mortality so alarmed the king of Assyria, as an awful stroke cf divine vengeance, that, lest the remaining part of his army should undergo the same

ten, we left El Mout. At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggré to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, our guide cried out, 'Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom!' I saw from the S. E. a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground, with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat upon the ground, as if dead, till our guide told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw, was indeed passed, but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it, nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation, till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards. A universal despondency had taken possession of our people. They ceased to speak to one another, and when they did, it was in whispers, by which I easily guessed that they were increasing each other's fears, by vain suggestions, calculated to sink each other's spirits still further. This phenomenon of the Simoom, unexpected by us, though foreseen by our guide, caused us all to relapse into our former despondency. It still continued to blow, so as to exhaust us entirely, though the blast was so weak as scarcely would have raised a leaf from the ground. At twenty minutes before five the simoom ceased, and a comfortable and cooling breeze came by starts from the north." Della Valle mentions the melancholy fate of two gentlemen, who were travelling with him, and who having gone during the middle of the day into a khan to rest, fell asleep at the open window, and were found dead, and their bodies very black and disfigured, in consequence of a blast of the simoom having passed over them while they lay, unconscious of their danger, in that exposed situation. Another traveller men-tions, that the water in their skins was dried up in a moment, and that his companion, who had been bathing in the Tigris, having on a pair of Turkish drawers, showed them, on his return, perfectly dried in an instant by this hot wind having come across the river. The most circumstantial, however, as well as the most recent account of a dreadful destruction occasioned by this hot wind in the year 1813, is given in the news-papers of that day. The caravan from Mecca to Aleppo consisted of 2000 souls, merchants and travellers, pilgrims returning from performing their devotions at Mecca, and a numerous train of attendants, the whole escorted by 400 military. The march was in three columns. On the 15th of August they entered the great Arabian desert, interesting particulars: "On the 16th, at half past I in which they travelled seven days, and were near-

^{*} The Babylonian Talmud affirms that lightning was the agent employed on this occasion; and some of the Targums are quoted as asserting the same thing. Other writers believe that the Assyrians perished by means of a hot wind, which God caused to blow against them,-a wind very common in those parts, and which makes great ravages, stifling thousands of persons in a moment, as often happens to those great caravans of Mahometans which go on pilgrimage to Mecca. In one passage this destruction is attributed to an angel of the Lord; but in another part of the same history, and also by Isaiah, it is said to have been occasioned by a blast, which is generally and on good grounds supposed to mean the Simoom. The approach of this pestilential wind is indicated by a haze in the atmosphere, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, and passes along with silent, and incredible velocity. The moment it is perceived by the natives and the camels, who are well acquainted with its fatal power, they instantly fall to the ground, and bury their mouth and nostrils in the sand.—Mr Bruce's account of this wonderful natural phenomenon affords some very

calamity; he retired with the utmost pre- in the very temple of Nisroch,+ his darling cipitation to his palace of Nineveh, where, after a while, he was cut off by his two eldest sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer,*

ly approaching its boundary. A few hours more would have placed them beyond the reach of danger, when, on the morning of the 23d, just as they had struck their tents, and begun their march, a wind rose and blew with tremendous rapidity. They pushed on as fast as their beasts of burden could carry them, to escape the threatened danger, when the fatal simoom set in suddenly, the sky was overcast, dense clouds appeared, whose extremity darkened the horizon, and shot with the rapidity of lightning across the desert. They approached the columns of the caravan. Both men and beasts, overcome by a sense of common danger, uttered piercing cries, and the next moment fell beneath its pestilential influence. Of 2000 souls composing the caravan, not more than twenty escaped the calamity, and these owed their preservation to the swiftness of their dromedaries. Such, in all probability, was the terrible agent which heaven employed for the destruction of the prodigious army led on by the king of Assyria. Herodotus gives us, from the relation of the Egyptian priests, some kind of a disguised account of this deliverance from the Assyrians in a fubulous application of it to the city of Pelusium, instead of Jerusalem, and to Sethon the Egyptian king, instead of Hezekiah; by whose piety he saith it was obtained, that while the king of Assyria laid siege to Pelusium, a great number of rats were miraculously sent into his army, which in one night did eat all their shield-straps, quivers, and bow-strings; so that, on their rising the next morning, finding themselves without arms for the carrying on of the war, they were forced to raise the siege and be gone. And it is particularly to be remarked, that Herodotus calls the king of Assyria, to whom he saith this happened, by the same name of Sennacherib, as the scriptures do, and the time in both doth also well agree: which plainly shows, that it is the same fact that is referred to by Herodotus, although much disguised in the relation; which may easily be accounted for, when we consider that it comes to us through the hands of such as had the greatest aversion both to the nation and the religion of the Jews, and therefore would relate nothing in such manner as might give any reputation to either .- Bruce, Jamieson, and Prideaux.

* When Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, after the destruction of so great an army, being enraged for his great loss and disappointment, he grew thenceforth very cruel and tyrannical in the management of his government, especially toward the Jews and Israelites, abundance of whom he caused every day to be slain, and cast into the streets; by which savage humour he made himself so intolerable that he could be no longer borne by his own family. It has been asserted that he demanded of some about him what the reason might be that the irresistible God of heaven so favoured the Jewish nation? To which he was

idol. The people of the country, detesting the inhumanity of the action, banished them out of their dominions, whereupon they fled into Armenia, Esarhaddon, the third son, succeeding to the government: thus ended this mighty expedition.

Hezekiah being now delivered bevond all expectation from any farther apprehension of trouble or danger, and likewise thoroughly convinced that it was the immediate hand of God that wrought his preservation, as well by the blast that destroyed one part of the Assvrian army, as by the terror of that judgment that dismayed the rest; he, together with the people, offered up praises and thanksgivings for the mercies received; he was seized with so dangerous a distemper,1

answered, that Abraham, from whom they were descended, by sacrificing his only son to him, had purchased his protection to his progeny; whereupon the king replied, 'If that will win him, I will spare him two of mine to gain him to my side;' which, when his two sons, Sharezer and Adrammelech heard, they resolved to prevent their own death by sacrificing him. But for all this fiction there is no other foundation than the authority of the Rabbins, and scarce any thing else can be thought of that can afford any excuse for so wicked a parricide. - Prideaux's Connection

+ Some take this god to be the figure of Noah's ark; others of a dove, which was worshipped among the Assyrians; and others of an eagle. The Hebrew of Tobit, published by Munster, calls it Dagon; but Selden acknowledges, that, in all his reading, he never met with any thing that could help him to explain it. Jurieu however seems to be more lucky in his inquiries; for, by several arguments he has made it appear, that this idol was Jupiter Belus, the founder of the Babylonish empire, who was worshipped under the form of an eagle; and therefore, he observes farther, that, as this Belus in profane history was the same with the Nimrod of Moses, between Nimrod and Nisroch the dissimilitude is not great, nor is it improbable that, to perpetuate his hon our, his votaries might change the name of Nim-rod, which signifies a rebel, into that of Nisroch, which denotes a young eagle .- Patrick's Commentary and Jurieu.

† Dr Mead is of opinion that the malady was a fever which terminated in an abscess; and for promoting its suppuration a cataplasm of figs was admirably adapted. The case of Hezekiah, however, indicates not only the limited knowledge or the Jewish physicians at that time, but also that though God can cure by a miracle, yet he also gives sagacity to discover and apply the most natural remedies .- Horne.

friends despaired of his life.*

In this distress, nothing so sensibly afflicted the king, as the consideration, that on his dying without issue, the succession of the family would be at an end, and the kingdom absolutely left without a legitimate heir.

The anxiety arising from this circumstance so affected the pious king, that he addressed himself to God with supplications and tears+ for the prolonging of his life, till he might have a successor out of his loins, and not to take him out of the number of the living till he might be the father of a son to preserve his memory to succeeding times.

God took compassion on him, and the rather because he was not so much trou-

* In the course of the sacred history, this sickness of Hezekiah's is placed immediately after the defeat and death of Sennacherib; whereas it plainly happened before that time, because in the message which God sent him upon his bed of sickness by the prophet Isaiah, he promises to deliver Jerusalem out of the hands of the king of Assyria,

2 Kings xx. 6. The truth of the matter is, Hezekiah reigned, in all, nine and twenty years, 2 Kings xviii. 2. He had already reigned fourteen years when Sennacherib invaded him, 2 Kings xviii. 18. and after his sickness he continued to reign fifteen years, 2 Kings xx. 6. so that his sickness must have happened in the very same year that the king of Assyria invaded his kingdom; but the sacred penman deferred the account he was to

give of that, until he had finished the history of Sennacherib, which he was willing to give the reader at one view; and this is the true reason of the mislocation.—Calmet's Commentary.

† The love of life is natural to us, and the fear

of death is so strongly implanted in our very frame. and constitution, that it requires no small share of fortitude to receive the sentence of our dissolution with a proper serenity, and composure of mind: human infirmity there was a sufficient apology for Hezekiah's behaviour; but there is somewhat more to be alleged in his behalf. He saw in himself the royal family of David extinct (he being as yet childless) and consequently all hopes of the Messiah's being born of his race were become abortive. He saw the impending storm that threatened his country with ruin and desolation, and that as there were none of his family to succeed him in the throne, all things were in danger of running into anarchy and confusion. Having this dismal prospect therefore before his eyes, he might well melt into tears at the apprehension of his approaching, death, which would extinguish all his hopes, and consummate all his fears, in making: him go down childless to the grave.

that his physicians and the rest of his | bled for being deprived of his kingdom by death, as for the want of a successor in his own line of descent.

> Upon this the prophet Isaiah was sent to him, with the comfortable assurance, that in three days his disease should leave him, that he should live fifteen years longer, and that the kingdom should descend at last to his own son and heir.

> When the prophet had delivered this message to the king, according to his order, the disease was so desperate, and the news so surprising, that Hezekiah could not persuade himself into a belief of it, without some sign from Isaiah, in confirmation of his authority and commission.

> The prophet asked him what sign or token would give him satisfaction? so he propounded, that the shadow upon his dial i might go ten degrees backward from the place where it stood.

[‡] Whether the people on the east of the Euphrates, or the Jews or Phænicians, first invented this instrument, we know not. The Greeks knew nothing of dials till the time of Anaximander, the contemporary of Cyrus. Nor in history do we find a dial more ancient than that of Ahaz. Nor is there any mention of hours, till the time of Daniel's captivity in Babylon, chap. iv. 9. Some learned men suppose, that the word, which our version renders a dial, was no more than a flight. of stairs, and the degrees were the steps of the stair. Others contend it was a real dial; but of what form, horizontal or vertical, or of what other form; they are not agreed. It is certain, a real miracle on this dial or stair, marked the certainty of Hezekiah's future restoration to health: but whether the sun, or only his shadow, went backward the ten degrees, is still controverted. Those who maintain that only the shadow went back, observe, that in 2 Kings mention is only made of the going back of the shadow, and that in Isaiah's account of this matter, the sun may be put for his shadow; that the shadow might go back by an inflection of the rays of the sun that if the sun had gone back gradually, the day would have been 10 or 20 hours longer than ordinary, and so one part of the world scorched, and the other half freezed for if it had gone back instantaneously, the frame of nature must have felt an insufferable shock, which the astronomers of these times could not have failed to observe: and that it was needless for God to put himself to the expense of so. great a miracle, when the inflection of the solar. rays might as well serve the turn. To me the. whole of this reasoning appears rather showy than: solid. In favour of the sun's going back, it is easy to observe, that no miracle is more difficult to God than another; that we are expressly told that the sun went back; that it is hard to conceive how the

wrought by the prayers of the prophet, was restored to health, and went immediately up to the temple to return thanks to God, his gracious deliverer.

About this time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan king of Babylon, having sent ambassadors with presents to Hezekiah, invited him into a league of amity and alliance.

Hezekiah received them with great courtesy; entertained them sumptuously, showed them his treasure and his armoury, and whatever else he had that was magnificent and valuable, either in gold or precious stones, and sent them back with rich presents to their master.

Upon this Isaiah came to him, and asked him who those men were, and whence they came? He told the prophet, that they were sent from the king of Babylon, and that he had showed them all the riches and curiosities of his palace, that they

shadow could go back without the sun; that if all had been done by a mere inflection of the rays of the sun, it would have been a private affair, and not alarmed the Chaldeans, as it seems it did; that the Chinese annals inform us, that the planet Mars went back several degrees, for the sake of one of their kings, about this same time.-Brown.

The king, on seeing this miracle might gather from thence how great a prince he was, and thereby possess the king with a just apprehension of his power and importance.

> The prophet, by way of reproof, thus addressed him: "Know then, that it will not be long before this treasure of yours shall be carried to Babylon; several of your posterity shall be degraded, and serve the court of Babylon in the quality of eunuchs. This you will find to be a truth; for God himself hath foretold it."

> This prediction pierced the very soul of Hezekiah, and extorted from him this declaration: "Though I cannot but be much troubled at the thought of the misery that attends my family, yet since it is God's pleasure, I have no more to beg from heaven than that I may enjoy the small remainder of my miserable life. in peace."

> Hezekiah, according to his humble request, lived during the residue of his reign in peace, and died in the four and fiftieth year of his life, and the nine and twentieth of his reign, and was buried with great solemnity in the most honourable place of the sepulchres of the sons of David.

HISTORY OF THE EIBLE.

BOOK VII.

FROM THE DEATH OF HEZEKIAH TO THE DEATH OF NEHEMIAH.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE flagitious reign of the kings of Judah, from Manasseh to Zedekiah, under whose government the Jews were carried into captivity to Babylon, occupy the first portion of the period on which we now Among these seven remaining kings, only one is found to imitate the example of his father David, -good Josiah, who appeared like a benignant star in the His reign is strikingly Jewish horizon. contrasted with those of the idolatrous and infatuated kings that immediately preceded and those who followed him. In God's dealings with the Jews are clearly delineated his long-suffering towards his people, and his severe chastisements for their iniquitous abuse of his mercy: at the same time they mark most decidedly his veracity, both in his promises and his threatenings, and show the utter vanity of trusting in an arm of flesh, and the instability of kingdoms from which piety and justice are banished. The invasion of their country by the hostile armies of the Babylonians, and the consequent calamities which befell the chosen people previous to their being carried away captives into a foreign country, as well as the miseries attendant on their exile, are topics which frequently

predicting those impending judgments we find them soaring into the boldest flights of imagination, and depicting the terrible events that were coming upon the land in strains of unrivalled pathos and sublimity. The images under which the prophet Jeremiah represents the approaching desolation as foreseen by him, are such as were familiar to the Hebrew poets on similar occasions, who, when they would express the happiness, prosperity, and advancement of states, kingdoms, and potentates, make use of similitudes taken from the most striking parts of nature, from the heavenly bodies, from the sun, moon, and stars, which they describe as shining with increased splendour, and never setting: the moon becomes like the meridian sun, and the light of the sun is augmented seven-fold; new heavens and a new earth are created, and a brighter age commences. On the contrary, when the overthrow and destruction of kingdoms are represented,—the stars are obscured, the moon withdraws her light, and the sun shines no more; the earth quakes and the heavens tremble, and all things seem tending to their original chaos; a frightful solitude reigns all around, even the birds themselves have deserted the fields, unable to find in them any longer their usual employed the pens of the prophets; and in | food. The face of the country in the

once most fertile parts of it, now overgrown with briars and thorns, assumes the dreary wildness of the desert. The cities and villages are either thrown down and demolished by the hand of the enemy, or crumble into ruins for want of being inhabited.

To a people so highly favoured of heaven as they had in general hitherto been, the condition of the chosen tribes, during their captivity, must have been truly humiliating. For though in their exiled state they had judges and elders of their own who governed them, and judicially decided their disputes according to their own laws, a proof of which we find in the story of Susannah, who was condemned to death by the elders of her own nation, yet they were evidently in a state of degradation, precluded altogether from the worship of their temple, and subject to the continual taunts and reproaches of their conquerors. This is abundantly apparent from that beautiful and affecting ode, the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, in which we seem to read the very language of their souls: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion: we hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there those that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." The years of their captivity, however, drew to a close, and when Cyrus had made himself master of Babylon, the morning dawned, and a flood of light burst in upon them. A proclamation was issued allowing the Jews to return to their beloved city, with permission to rebuild the temple and the walls which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; and he also

gave them the vessels of their sanctuary to take back with them. Nevertheless the entire completion of the prophecies relating to the captivity does not seem to have taken effect until Artaxerxes Longimanus commissioned Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem, and carry into execution what Cyrus had commenced,—Jehovah thus making the ministry of heathen princes subservient to his gracious designs towards his chosen people.

CHAPTER I.

Hezekiah is succeeded by Manasseh, whose country is ravaged by the king of Babylon, for his wickedness.—He is taken prisoner, but upon his repentance set at liberty.—His son Amon is soon cut off, and succeeded by Josiah, a prince of exemplary piety.—Instance of his zeal for the true worship of God.—His death by an extraordinary incident.—Is succeeded by an impious son, who is deposed by the king of Egypt, and dies in exile.

Manassen, the son of Hezekiah by Hephzibah, a native of Jerusalem, succeeded his father in the government, but deviated from his pious example in every instance that was practicable, committing all those abominations that in former reigns had brought such judgments on the Israelites.

He was so daring a libertine as to profane the holy temple itself, and consequently the whole city, and every part of his dominions, with his detestable idolatries. He began his reign with a contempt of God, and proceeded to a barbarous and bloody persecution of holy and good men, dipping his hands in the blood of the very prophets themselves;* inso-

^{*} The prophets who are supposed to have been living in this king's reign, were Hoshea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, some say Obadiah, and, who was the greatest prophet of them all, Isaiah. In the late reign he was in great esteem at court, and being himself of the blood royal, and, as some say, the king's father-in-law, he thought it more incumbent upon him to endeavour to reclaim him from his degenerate wicked courses: but this so exasperated him against Isaiah, that instead of hearkening to his remonstrances, he caused him to be ap-

much, that haidly a day passed without putting some of them to death, so that the very streets of Jerusalem ran down with blood. The cry of these impious and inhuman outrages called so loudly to heaven for vengeance, that God was highly incensed at his daring impiety, and sent sundry prophets, one after another, both to the king and to the people, with cautions to them to repent in time of their neglect of God's worship, and to return to their duty, upon the peril of suffering the same calamities for the same sins that had been inflicted upon their brethren the Israelites before them.

But they regarded not the voice of God by his servants; till they found their inattention and negligencies followed with most awful tokens of the divine wrath; for, upon their impiously persisting in their disbelief and contempt of the divine word, God stirred up Esarhaddon, the king of Babylon and Chaldea, to make war upon them; who sent an army into

prehended, and to make his torture both more lingering and more exquisite, had him sawn asunder with a wooden saw, to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. xi. 37. may be thought to allude. Many instances occur in ancient writers, of this method of executing criminals; and from Dr Shaw and other modern travellers we learn, that it is still in use among some nations, particularly the western Moors in Barbary. It is thought to have come originally from Persia or Chaldea; and it certainly corresponds with the barbarous dispositions which those bitter and hasty nations too much indulged. Calmet informs us, that not many years ago, the Swiss executed this terrible punishment in the plain of Grenelles, near Paris, on one of their own countrymen who had been guilty of a great crime. They put him into a coffin and sawed him at length, beginning at the head, as a piece of wood is sawn. Parisates the king of Persia, caused Roxana to be sawn in two alive. According to Windus, the same dreadful punishment is often inflicted in Morocco, where the criminal is put between two boards, and sawn from the head downwards till the body fall in two The laws of the twelve tables, which the Romans borrowed from the Greeks, condemned certain malefactors to the punishment of the saw; but the execution of it was so rare, that, according to Aulus Gellius, none remembered to have seen it practised. But in the time of Caligula the emperor, many people of rank and fortune were condemned to be sawn in two through the middle. - Calmet and Paxton.

much, that hardly a day passed without Judea, that over-ran and destroyed the putting some of them to death, so that the whole country, surprised Manasseh, and every streets of Jerusalem ran down with carried him away prisoner.

This miserable prince was now by woful experience rendered sensible of his fault; and upon that reflection earnestly besought God, so far to soften the hearts of his enemies, as might move them to treat him with some degree of tenderness and humanity. God was not inexorable, but in pity gave ear to his supplication; so that the king of Babylon, after some time, gave Manasseh his liberty, and restored him to his former government.

Upon his arrival at Jerusalem, by the permission and clemency of the conqueror, he made all possible efforts to atone for his former miscarriages, evincing the principles and practices of a new man, and becoming, from the most impious profaner of sacred things, a most zealous promoter of true religion; for he purged the city, and consecrated the temple afresh, making it his whole business to express his gratitude and reverence toward God, and to preserve to himself his blessing and favour all the days of his life. He took care, both by example and authority, to instruct the people in their duties, being conscious to himself that his former maladministration contributed not a little to the misfortunes of the public. He caused an altar to be erected after the prescription and appointment of Moses, and offered daily sacrifices upon it.

When he had restored religion, and the discipline of it, to its original state and purity, he made it his business to fortify Jerusalem; repairing the old walls, and encompassing them with new ones. He built several high and strong towers, and furnished all the out-works with provisions of all sorts. His conversion to God was attended with such auspicious circumstances, that from the first date of it to the day of his death, he was looked upon to be one of the happiest of princes. He died in the sixty-seventh year of his age, in the five and fiftieth of his reign, and

was buried in his own garden, called the success would crown his undertakings;
garden of Uzzah.* His son Amon succeeded him in the government.

success would crown his undertakings;
and set before him the terrible judgment that had been inflicted on his predecessors

This prince, following the loose example of his father's youth, and practising the same abominations, was quickly called to an account for his miscarriages, by some of his familiar friends and domestics, who cut him off in the four and twentieth year of his life, and the second of his reign. The people brought the murderers to condign punishment, and laid his body in the monument of his father, delivering up the government to his son Josiah, who was at that time a youth of but eight years of age.

Josiah, who was a young prince of an excellent disposition, seems to have proposed the example of holy David as the grand directory of his whole life. In the sixteenth year of his age, he gave an eminent instance of an innate piety and justice, in the reformation of the people from their erroneous persuasions concerning false gods, and gaining them over to reverence the religion of their country.

He repealed several of the ordinances of his forefathers; corrected whatever he found amiss, and applied such remedies, where the case required any such expedient, as the most mature and consummate wisdom and experience could have supplied. He regulated his life in exact conformity to the laws of God, and this he seems to have done partly from a pious disposition, and partly from the admonition and advice of the council; who reminded him, that while he reigned with true regard to the interest of his country, and in strict obedience to the Divine will,

success would crown his undertakings; and set before him the terrible judgment that had been inflicted on his predecessors for their apostasy: wherefore he caused all the groves to be cut down that were dedicated to false gods; their altars to be demolished, and all the donations that had been consecrated by their ancestors to the worship of false gods to be taken away, and treated with derision.

The demolition of idols, and all that was erected to the honour of false gods, was general throughout his dominions; by which means the true worship was introduced with all the rites and ceremonies appertaining to the same.

He appointed also certain magistrates and commissioners, for the regulation of manners and the order of matters in private cases, that no less care might be taken for the distribution of particular justice than for the government of life itself.

He likewise despatched messengers throughout all his dominions, with orders to receive contributions of gold and silver toward the repairing of the temple, from those that were willing to advance that work; deaving all people at liberty that they might have no cause of complaint.

The money collected and brought in, was committed to the care and disposal of Maaseiah, the governor of the city; Shaphan, the scribe; Joah, the recorder; and Hilkiah, the high-priest; with orders immediately to enter upon the work, and provide artificers, and all materials necessary for the reparation.

By this means the temple was repaired, and a lasting monument erected to posterit; c' the ring p et and bounty.

Josiah, in the eighteenth year of his reign, ordered Hilkiah the priest to have he surplus of the gold and silver that remained over and above the charge of the fabric, cast into cups, chalices, and other vessels, for the use and service of the temple; ordering likewise, that all the gold and silver remaining still in the

^{*} This garden, as some think, was made in that very spot of ground where Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark of the Lord, 2 Sam. vi. 7. but others imagine that this was the place where Uzziah, who died a leper, was buried, 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. and that Manasseh chose to be buried here, as unworthy, because of his manifold sins, (whereof he nevertheless repented.) to be laid in any of the royal sepulchres of the kings of Judah. Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

treasury, should be brought out, and applied to the same purposes,

But the high-priest, upon removing the gold, happened to discover the sacred books of Moses, as they were deposited in the temple, which he took out and gave to Shaphan to peruse; who, upon reading them over, went to the king, and told him they had executed all his commands; but withal, they had just now found the books of Moses,—which he read over to Josiah.

Upon the reading of these books, the king rent his garment, and calling some of his particular friends about him, with the scribe himself, and Hilkiah the highpriest, he sent them to the prophetess Huldah,* the wife of Shallum, a man of great eminence, to desire her intercession with God on their behalf, to implore his mercy for him and his people; for it was much to be feared, that some heavy judgment should befall that people for their ancestors' neglect and contempt of the laws of Moses, and that they should be forced from their native soil, to live like vagabonds, dispersed over the face of the earth, and end their days in misery, without obtaining a reconciliation from God.

The prophetess, upon hearing the king's orders and instructions, bade them return him this answer:

"That the sentence was already pronounced, and not to be recalled, upon any supplication or intercession whatsoever; that the people were to be banished their own country, and punished for their disobedience, with the loss of all the comforts of human life; and that this judgment was irrevocable, for their obstinacy in their superstitious impieties, notwithstanding so many earnest exhortations to a timely repentance, and the prophets' menacing predictions of all these judgments, if they persisted in their wickedness."

This unchangeable decree was to convince them by the event, that there is a just and over-ruling God; and that the predictions which he delivered by the mouth of his prophets are infallibly true, and the certain indications of his holy pleasure to mankind.

"But, however," says the prophetess, "tell the king, that out of a regard to his piety and goodness, God would yet be so gracious as not to bring this judgment upon the people in his days; but that the day of his death shall be the eve of their final destruction."

Josiah, upon the report of this answer from Huldah, sent messengers throughout all the cities; commanding all the priests and Levites, and men of all ages and conditions, to come up to Jerusalem.

The first thing he did upon the meeting was to read the holy books of Moses to them. After which, raising himself upon an eminence in the middle of the throng, he administered to them an oath of obedience to the laws and precepts of Moses, and the observance of God's holy worship, which was taken by the whole multitude with great alacrity and universal consent. This sacred oath was followed with sacrifices and prayers to God for his favour and blessing.

In the next place he laid a strict charge

^{*} This is the only mention we have of this prophetess, and certainly it makes much to her renown, that she was consulted upon this weighty occasion, when both Jeremiah and Zephaniah were at that time prophets in Judah. But Zephaniah perhaps at that time might not have commenced a prophet; because, though we are told that he prophesied in the days of Josiah, yet we are no where informed in what part of his reign he entered upon the prophetic office. Jeremiah, too, might at that time be absent from Jerusalem, at his house at Anathoth, or some more remote part of the kingdom; so that, considering Josiah's haste and impatience, there might be no other remedy at hand to apply to, but this woman. Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us,' says the king to his ministers, 2 Kings xxii. 13. and therefore his intent in sending them might be to inquire, whether there were any hopes of appeasing his wrath, and in what manner it was to be done. Being therefore assured of this woman's fidelity in delivering the mind and counsel of God, the ministers, who went to inquire, concluded rightly, that it was much more considerable, what message God sent, than by whose hand it was that he conveyed it .- Poole's Annotations.

account of the plate and vessels in the temple, and to cast out so many of them as he should find to have been dedicated by any of his ancestors to the worship of idols.

There were many pieces of that kind, that were reduced to dust, and the powder thrown into the air; all the priests were likewise put to death that were not of the stock of Aaron.

Having thus introduced a general reformation in Jerusalem, the king took a tour through his whole dominion, where he destroyed all the relicts of Jeroboam's superstition and idolatry, and burnt the bones of the false prophets upon the very altar that Jeroboam had set up.*

Nor did Josiah's zeal rest here; for he sent and went in person to several other Israelites that had escaped the servitude and bondage of the Assyrians, to persuade them at last to forsake the superstitious vanities of foreign religions, and to cleave wholly to the worship of the great God of their fathers, according to the rites and customs of their religion, and serve him alone.

He likewise caused a strict search to be made in all towns and villages for the discovery of any remainders of idolatrous practices that might lie concealed, even to the very figures of the horses over the porch of the temple, that their forefathers had dedicated to the sun; + and every

upon the high-priest to take a particular | figure and monument, to which the common people had ignorantly ascribed divine honours Josiah caused to be taken away and destroyed.

Having purged the whole nation from every kind of idolatry, he convened all the people at Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, otherwise called the passover, and gave the multitude out of his own store, thirty thousand young kids and lambs, and three thousand oxen.

The heads of the priests contributed likewise to their order upon the same occasion, two thousand six hundred lambs, and three hundred oxen; as did the chief of the Levites to their tribe five thousand lambs, and five hundred bullocks: this prodigious number of victims was offered up in sacrifice according to the laws of Moses.

From the time of Samuel the prophet, to that day, there had never been so solemn a festival; t for every thing was

these horses and chariots standing so near together. the horses, we may suppose, were designed to draw the chariots, and the chariots to carry the king, and his other great officers, who were idolaters of this kind, out at the east gate of the city, every morning, to salute and adore the sun at its com-

ing above the horizon.—Bochart.

† The words of the text are, 'Surely there was not held such a passover from the days of the judges, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of Judah,' 2 Kings xxiii. 22. which, taken in a literal sense, must denote, that this passover, which was celebrated by two tribes only, was more numerous, and more magnificent, than all those that were observed in the days of David and Solomon, in the most happy and flourishing state of the Jewish monarchy, when all the tribes were met together to solemnize that feast. It may not be amiss therefore to allow, that in these expressions, there is a kind of auxesis or exaggeration, not unusual in sacred, as well as in profane, authors. For nothing is more common than to say, 'never was , so much splendour and magnificence seen,' when we mean no more than that the thing we speak of was very splendid and magnificent: nuless we suppose with some, that a preference is given to this passover above all the rest, in respect of the exact observation of the rites and ceremonies belonging to it, which, at other times, were performed according to custom, and several things either altered or omitted; whereas at this, every thing was performed 'according to the prescribed form of the law,' from which, since the finding of this authentic copy of it, Josiah enjoined them not to vary one tittle .- Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

^{*} The prophet foretold, in the hearing of all the people, at the very time when Jeroboam was offering sacrifices, that one of the race of David, Josiah by name, was to do this, whose prediction was made good by the event, three hundred and sixty-

one years after the thing was foretold.

† It is certain, that all the people of the East worshipped the sun, and consecrated horses to it, because they were nimble and swift in their course, even as they supposed the sun to be. But then the question is, whether the people of Judah sacrificed these horses to the sun, as it is certain the Armenians, Persians, and other nations did, or only led ther, out in state every morning, to meet and salute the sun, at his rising. The ancients had a notion that the sun itself was carried about in a chariot; and therefore chariots, as well as horses, were dedicated to it. Since then we find

done according to the direction of the law, and the prescriptions of ancient custom.

Josiah, after this blessed regulation, enjoyed his government in peace, honour, and plenty; till he met his death in the following manner.

Pharaoh-Necho,* king of Egypt, marched with a powerful army toward Euphrates, against the Medes and Babylonians, who had subverted the Assyrian empire, with a design to make himself master of Asia.

When he had advanced as far as Megiddo,† a town under the jurisdiction of Josiah, that prince absolutely refused him any passage against the Medes through his country.

* Pharaoh signifies no more in the Egyptian language than king, and was therefore given to any one that sat upon that throne: but Necho, according to Herodotus, was his proper name, though some will have it to be an appellative, which signifies lame, because this Pharaoh, as they suppose, had a lameness which proceeded from some wound he had received in the wars. The me historian tells us, that he was the son and successor of Psammetichus, king of Egypt, and a man of a bold enterprising spirit. He made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red sea, by drawing a canal from one to the other; but after he had consumed a hundred and twenty thousand men in the work, he was forced to abandon his design. But he had better success in another undertaking; for by sending a fleet from the Red sea through the straits of Babel-mandel, he discovered the coasts of Africa, and, in this his expedition to the Euphrates, resolved to bid fair, by destroying the united force of the Babylonian and Medes, for the whole monarchy of Asia .- Prideaux and Marsham.

† Megiddo was a city in the half tribe of Manasseh, not far from the Mediterranean sea, which way Necho was to pass with his army, in order to go into Syria, and thence to the Euphrates. In the valley adjoining to this place Josiah was slain while he was at the head of his army. This action Herodotus makes mention of, when he tells us, that Necho, king of Egypt, having fallen upon the Syrians near the city Magdol, obtained a great victory, and made himself master of Cadytis: where the author plainly mistakes the Syrians for the Jews; Magdolum, a city in Lower Egypt, for Megiddo; and Cadytis, for Kadesh, in Upper Galilee, by which he was to pass in his way to Carchemish, or rather for the city of Jerusalem, which, in Herodotus's time, might be called by the neighbouring nations Cadyta, or Cadyscha, i. e. 'the holy city;' since, even to this day, it is called by the Eastern people Al-kuds, which is plainly both of the same signification and original.—Calmet and Prideaux.

Pharaoh upon this sent a herald, to give Josiah to understand that he had no thought of hostility toward him; nor any design, but to have made a hasty march towards Euphrates; desiring him withal not to put him upon any necessity of making his way by force, as that was very much against his inclination.

BOOK VII

This message of the Egyptian had so little effect upon Josiah, that he persisted in the denial of his passage. His obstinacy soon proved fatal to him; for as he was at the head of his army, riding up and down to give orders from one wing to another, an Egyptian pierced him with an arrow, and by that means decided the matter in dispute between the two contending kings. Finding himself in great agony from the stroke he had received, he commanded his army to retire; and returning to Jerusalem, there died of the wound.t. He was buried with a magnificent solemnity, in the sepulchre of his ancestors, in the nine and thirtieth year of his age, and in the one and thirtieth of his reign; the people mourning for him several days with great sorrow and lamentation.§

† With Josiah perished all the glory, honour, and prosperity of the Jewish nation. For after that nothing else ensued but a dismal scene of God's judgments on the land, till at length all Judah and Jerusalem were swallowed up by them in a woful destruction. The death of so excellent a prince was deservedly lamented by all his people, and by none more than Jeremiah the prophet, who had a thorough sense of the greatness of the loss, and also a full foresight of the great calamities that were afterwards to follow upon the whole people of the Jews; and therefore, while his heart was full with the view of both, he wrote a song of lamentation upon this doleful occasion, as he afterwards did another upon the destruction of Jerusalem.—Dean Prideaux.

§ The Jews were used to make lamentations, or mournful songs, upon the death of great men, princes, and heroes, who had distinguished them selves in arms, or by any civil arts had merited well of their country. By an expression in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. 'Behold they are written in the Lamentations,' one may infer that they had certain collections of this kind of composition. The author of the book of Samuel has preserved those which David made upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, of Abner, and Absalom: but this mournful poem, which the disconsolate prophet

After the death of Josiah, his son Jehoahaz took the government upon him in the three and twentieth year of his age, and kept his court at Jerusalem.

He was a man of an impious and immoral disposition, and his mother's name was Hamutal.

The king of Egypt, upon his return from the war, sent for Jehoahaz to come to him to Hamath, a city of Syria, where he put him in fetters, and delivered up the government to Eliakim, his elder brother, by the same father, but changed his name to Jehoiakim;* and imposing a tax upon the country of a hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold, by this means he rendered him tributary.

As for Jehoahaz, he carried him along with him into Egypt, where he ended his life, after he had reigned three months and ten days.

This prince trode in the steps of his abandoned ancestors, and followed their example of impiety, injustice, and idolatry.

CHAPTER II.

The Egyptians defeated by the king of Babylon.

—Predictions of the prophet Jeremiah.—Instance of the cruelty and perfidy of Nebuchadnezzar, who deposes Jehoiachin, and sets up Zedekiah upon his throne.—Second defeat of the Egyptians by the same king.—Zedekiah's obstinate contempt of the prophet's counsel.

made upon the immature death of good Josiah, we nowhere have; which is a loss the more to be deplored, because, in all probability, it was a master-piece in its kind; since never was there an author more deeply affected with his subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender sentiments of sorrow and compassion.— Calmet.

* It was a usual thing for conquerors to change the names of the persons they vanquished in war, in testimony of their absolute power over them. Thus we find the king of Babylon changing the name of Mattaniah into Zedekiah, when he constituted him king of Judah, 2 Kings xxiv. 17. But Usher has farther remarked, that the king of Egypt gave Eliakim the name of Jehoiakim, thereby to testify that he ascribed his victory over the Babylonians to Jehovah, the God of Israel, by whose excitation (as he pretended,) he undertook the expedition.—Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon advanced with a mighty army to Carchemish, a city situate upon the Euphrates with a resolution to make war upon Pharaoh-necho, who at that time had all Syria under his command.

The Egyptian well knowing that the Babylonian was no contemptible enemy, took the field with a strong and numerous army, and so marched to the Euphrates, with a resolution to oppose him; but the two armies engaging, the Egyptian was forced to retire with the loss of many thousands of his men.

The Babylonians, getting over the Euphrates, subdued the whole country of Syria as far as Pelusium,† Judea only excepted.

In the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar, and the eighth of Jehoiakim, the Babylonians broke in furiously upon Judea, threatening them with devastation, unless they would content themselves with the condition of tributaries, as the rest of the inhabitants of Syria were.

Upon this menace, Jehoiakim submitted to purchase his peace with a sum of money; and for the space of full three years, he made due payment of his contribution; but the year following, upon the credit of an idle report that the Egyptian was advancing upon an expedition against the king of Babylon, Jehoiakim refused to pay him his tribute, though he quickly found himself miserably disappointed in his expectation, for the Egyptians durst not look the Babylonians in the face.

[†] A town of Egypt, situate at the entrance of the mouths of the Nile, called from it Pelusian. It is about twenty stadia from the sea, and it has received the name of Pelusium from the lakes and marshes which are in its neighbourhood. It was the key of Egypt on the side of Phœnicia, as it was impossible to enter the Egyptian territories without passing by Pelusium; and therefore, on that account, it was always well fortified and garrisoned, as it was of such importance for the security of the country. It is now in ruins.—Lempriere.

times foretold, and warned him of, adding, moreover, that he would find the Egyptians a broken reed to trust to.

He presaged likewise the fate of Jerusalem, and that it was suddenly to be destroyed by the Babylonians, and Jehoiakim himself to be made prisoner.

But these warnings were not only unobserved, but treated by the generality of the people with the utmost contempt. There were some that exhibited formal accusations against the prophet to the king, and would have had him punished as a mover of sedition.

The cause, in fine, was brought before the council; and the majority were for putting him to death; but the reason of things is not always determined by a plurality of voices; so that some, better advised than the rest, were for discharging him the court, and diverting the blow; observing, that Jeremiah was not the only man that had foretold these calamities to the city, but that Micah had prophesied to the same purpose before him, as well as several others, without being called to account for it by the government; nay, that they were rather had in honour and esteem for their predictions, as the prophets of the Lord.

By this gentle method of reasoning, the council was wrought upon to change their minds, and to recall the sentence.

The prophet committed his predictions to writing, and upon a day of fasting, when the people were met together in the temple, in the ninth month of the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, he read the book to the congregation; wherein was contained the whole history of what was to befall the temple, the city, and the people.

The princes, upon the hearing of this book, took it away from the prophet, commanding both himself and his scribe Baruch,* immediately to depart, without

This the prophet Jeremiah had many letting any body know where to find them.

> Then they carried the book to the king, who ordered the secretary to read it to him,

Masseiah, was of illustrious birth, and of the tribe of Judah. Seraiah, his brother, had a considerable employment in the court of Zedekiah, but himself kept close to the person of Jeremiah, and was his most faithful disciple, though his adherence to his master drew upon him several persecutions, and a great deal of bad treatment. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Baruch and his master were permitted to stay in the land of Judea; but when the remains of the people, which were left behind after having slain their governor Gedaliah, were for retiring into Egypt, they com-pelled Jeremiah and his disciple to go along with them, where the prophet died, and Baruch soon after made his escape to his brethren in Babylon, where, according to the tradition of the Rabbins, he likewise died in the twelfth year of the captivity. But of what authority the book, which goes under his name, is, or by whom it was written, and whether any thing related therein be historically true, or the whole of it a fiction, is altogether uncertain. Grotius, in his commentary upon it, thinks it an entire fiction of some Hellenistical Jew, under the name of Baruch: and St Jerome, long before him, tells us, that the reason why he did not make a comment on this book (though, in the edition of the Septuagint, it be joined with Jeremiah) was, because it was not deemed canonical among the Hebrews, and contains an epistle which falsely bears the name of Jeremiah. This epistle is annexed to the book, and, in the common division of it, makes the last chapter; but the main subject of the book itself is likewise an epistle, either sent, or feigned to be sent by king Jehoiakim, and the Jews, who were in captivity with him in Babylon, to their brethren the Jews who were still left in Judah and Jerusalem: wherein they recommend to their prayers the emperor Nebuchadnezzar and his children, that under his dominion they may lead quiet and peaceable lives; wherein they confess their sins, and ask pardon for what is past, take notice of the threats of the prephets, which they had so long despised, and acknowledge the righteousness of God, in what he had brought upon them; wherein they remind them of the advantages which the Jews had in their knowledge of the law of God, and of true wisdom, above all other nations, and thereupon exhort them to reform their manners, and forsake their evil customs, which would be the only means to bring about their deliverance from the captivity, under which they groaned. whole is introduced with an historical preface, wherein it is related, that Baruch, being then at Babylon, did, in the name of the captive king and his people, draw up the same epistle, and after-wards read it to them for their approbation; and that, together with it, they sent a collection of money to the high-priest at Jerusalem for the maintenance of the daily sacrifices. This is the substance of the book itself: and, in the letter * Baruch, the son of Neriah, and grandson of annexed to it, which goes under Jeremiah's name,

and his friends about him. The king was so greatly alarmed when he heard the awful contents, that he tore the book, threw it into the fire, and ordered Jeremiah and Baruch to be immediately brought to him and punished. But they were already withdrawn out of the way.

Soon after this event, Jehoiakim being affrighted with so many dismal predictions. received the king of Babylon with his army into the city; and thinking himself secure from any danger, had made no preparations for the defence of the right of his crown. But the Babylonian, upon his admittance, broke his conditions, and put the flower of the youth of Jerusalem, together with the king himself, to the sword; commanding his body to be cast into the fields without the walls of the city, and constituting his son Jehoiachin king, both of the city and country, in his father's stead.

He carried away near three thousand men of note and quality, captives to Babylon; in which number was the prophet Ezekiel, being at this time a youth.

This was the end of the king Jehoiakim, who lived six and thirty years, and reigned eleven; and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him. His mother's name was Nehushta, of Jerusalem; and the time of his reign was three months and ten days.

When Nebuchadnezzar came to a serious review of his late transactions, he could not approve his placing Jehoiachin upon the throne, as it appeared reasonable to him that the young prince would endeavour to revenge the perfidy he had practised towards his deceased father, by exciting rebellion.

the vanity of the Babylonish idols and idolatry is set forth at large, and with liveliness enough. Of the whole there are but three copies; one in Greek, and the other two in Syriac, whereof one agreeth with the Greek, though the other very much differs from it; but in what language it was originally written, or whether one of these be not the original, or which of them may be so, it is next to impossible to tell.—Prideaux's Connection, and Calmet's preface to Baruch.

Upon this consideration he sent away an army to Jerusalem. Now Jehoiachin, being a just and humane prince, could not endure to see the city in danger of being utterly destroyed for his sake; and therefore entered into a treaty with the king of Babylon's deputies, surrendered the city on condition of the inhabitants being exempt from any kind of violence, and delivered hostages for the performance of all the articles specified.

But before the expiration of the year, the king of Babylon breaking his faith with them, commanded his officers to secure all the youth of the city, and all kinds of articles, and to bring them to him bound and fettered; so that ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-two persons (among whom were Jehoiachin himself, his mother, and his kindred) by the king's command, were all kept in custody.

Nebuchadnezzar having thus deprived Jehoiachin of his crown and dignity, advanced Zedekiah, his father's brother, to the government in his place; obliging him by oath neither to attempt any innovations in that country nor directly or indirectly join with, or assist the Egyptian. He was one and twenty years of age when he entered upon the government; and he and Jehoiakim were brothers by the mother's side. Zedekiah on his elevation discovered no regard to the laws of God, nor the interest of the people, but gave loose to the immediate sallies of a vicious inclination, and mixed with the herd in the idolatry and depravity of the age, insomuch that the prophet Jeremiah often exhorted him to change his course of life, and betake himself to the exercise of piety and justice, regardless of what his courtiers, or his false prophets told him; a lewd people who had abused him in their promises and predictions, when they told him the Babylonians should never besiege Jerusalem again; and that whenever they encountered, the Egyptians should overcome them.

As this was all false, and would appear

so to be by the event, Zedekiah could not | spited upon this occasion, the false profor the present but acknowledge the advice of the prophet to be reasonable, and that it was his interest to believe it; but when he attended to the counsels of mercenary sycophants, the prophet's address vanished from his mind.

At this very juncture, Ezekiel being at Babylon, foretold the destruction of the temple, and sent the prediction of it to Jerusalem. Now the two prophets agreed exactly in the particular circumstances of the town's being taken by force, and Zedekiah carried away captive; but the thing, and the only thing that staggered Zedekiah in the belief of the prophecy, was this; Ezekiel foretold that Zedekiah should not see Babylon. And Jeremiah affirmed that the king himself should carry him prisoner thither.

This seeming inconsistency, or at least diversity of expression, gave Zedekiah some sort of colour for doubting the truth of the other circumstances wherein they agreed, though the following events made good every thing that had been foretold.

After an alliance of eight years between the two kings, Zedekiah shamefully broke his contract, and went over to the interest of the Egyptians, assured that their power united would be able to crush the king of Babylon. But the Babylonian, upon the first notice of this treachery, marched his army toward Zedekiah, laid his country desolate, forced his castles and strong holds, and so advanced to the attack, even of Jerusalem itself.

The Egyptian being given to understand with what difficulties his friend and ally Zedekiah was surrounded, advanced immediately to his relief, with a resolution to attempt the raising the siege.

Now the Babylonian, upon intelligence of his march and design, instead of waiting for his arrival, withdrew from the siege, and advancing towards his army, a general engagement ensued, and the Egyptians were totally routed.

The siege being raised, or rather re- Calmet's Commentaries.

phets suggested a thousand delusions to Zedekiah; such as the folly of apprehending any danger from the Babylonians, or fearing that they should drive the Hebrews from their habitations, or carry them captive to Babylon; whereas it was rather to be expected, on the other hand, that their prisoners that were already exported should be called back again, and all the plate and treasure that the king had carried away, restored to the temple.*

But Jeremiah, on the contrary, assured the king, that events would turn out in direct contrariety to what his flatterers had falsely insinuated, positively charging them with imposture and delusion, and affirming, that there was no good to be expected from the Egyptians; but that they should first be overcome, and the Babylonian army return back to besiege Jerusalem; and that as many of them as should survive the sword and famine, should be carried away captive, their houses pillaged, their goods taken away, the temple and city plundered, and laid

· Nebuchadnezzar carried away the vessels and rich furniture of the temple at three different times. 1st, In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when he first took Jerusalem, he carried part of the vessels of the house of God away into the land of Shinar, and put them into the house of his god, Dan. i. 2. These were the vessels which his son Belshazzar profaned, Dan. v. 2. and which Cyrus restored to the Jews, (Ezra i. 7.) to be set up again in the temple when rebuilt. 2dly, In the reign of Jehoiachin he took the city again, and cut in pieces a great part of the vessels of gold which Solomon had made, 2 Kings xxiv. 13. and, by some chance or other, had escaped his former plunder. 3dly, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, he pillaged the temple once more, when he brake in pieces the pillars of brass, and the bases, and the brazen sea, and took along with him all the vessels of silver and gold that he could find, and carried them to Babylon, 2 Kings xxv. 13, &c. It is somewhat strange, that, among all this inventory, we hear no mention made of the ark of the covenant, which, of all other things, was held most sacred; but it is very probable, that it was burnt together with the temple in this last desolation. For, what some say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah, it a certain cave in mount Nebo, is a mere fable.-Patrick's and

waste by fire and sword, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition.

The terms of the prophecy were: "We are condemned to serve these people and their posterity for seventy years; and the Medes and Persians, at the seventy years' end, shall deliver us from that bondage, by the utter extinction of the Babylonian empire. After which time, being set at liberty by their assistance, we shall return hither again, rebuild the temple, and restore the city to its former state."

These words of the prophet gained the belief of the major part of the people; but the leading men, and the licentious, atheistical multitude, looked upon what he said as the discourse of a madman, and treated him accordingly.

As Jeremiah was going toward Anathoth, the place of his birth, about twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, he was met upon the way by a busy magistrate, who apprehended him, and took him into custody, upon a pretence that he was a deserter, and going over to the king of Babylon.

The prophet denied the accusation, and declared in his own defence that he was going to the place of his nativity. the other would not believe him, and therefore carried him away to the ministers of state, and officers of justice; where, after a formal examination, they set him aside as a malefactor condemned to die: and in this miserable condition, he continued for a considerable space.*

But in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the tenth month, and the tenth day of that month, the king of Babylon came once again with his army to Jerusalem; and laying siege to it, attempted, by the exertion of all his strength and artifice, during the space of eighteen months, to subdue it. But it still held out, not only against a powerful enemy before it, but a raging pestilence and famine in the midst of it, Jeremiah being in prison all this while, and crying out to the multitude to set open the gates, and receive the Babylonians into the city; as they had no other way to save themselves, their families, and the town, from a certain and an inevitable ruin; assuring them also, that those who staid in the city must expect to perish, either by the sword or by famine; whereas those who fled out to the enemy would save their lives. But the princes, in the depth of their extremity, were so far from giving ear to the prophet's presage and advice, that they represented him to the king as a turbulent man, a mutineer, and a discourager of the people, with his idle stories of misery and desolation; suggesting that the garrison was hearty and resolute enough to defend

smote him, and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison." This custom, so different from the manners of our country, has descended to modern times; for when Chardin visited the East, their prisons were not public buildings erected for that purpose, but, as in the days of the prophet, a part of the house in which their criminal judges reside. "As the governor, or provost of a town," says our traveller, "or the captain of the watch, imprison such as are accused, in their own houses, they set apart a canton of them for that purpose, when they are put into these offices, and choose for the jailer the most proper person they can find of their domestics." The royal prison in Jerusalem, and especially the dungeon, into which the prisoner was let down naked, seems to have been a most dreadful place. The latter cannot be better described than in the words of Jeremiah himself, who for his faithfulness to God and his country, in a most degenerate age, had to encounter all its horrors: "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon that was in the court of the statement of the prophet Jeremiah, in which he gives an account of his imprisonment: "Wherefore, the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and and his feet sunk in the mire."—Paxton.

^{*} There were two prisons in Jerusalem; of which one was called the king's prison, which had a lofty tower that overlooked the royal palace, with a spacious court before it, where state prisoners were confined. The other was designed to secure debtors and other inferior offenders: and in both these the prisoners were supported by the public on bread and water. Suspected persons were sometimes confined under the custody of state officers, in their own houses; or rather a part of the house which was occupied by the great officers of state, was occasionally converted into a prison. This seems to be a natural conclusion from the

the place to the last extremity, if he did not, with his ill-boding menaces of slavery and destruction, damp their zeal and courage.

The king was not by disposition rash or cruel, but at this critical juncture, fearing the effects of opposing the leading and principal persons of the city, he resigned the prophet to their disposal; wherefore they went in all haste to the prison; took out the prophet, and let him down by a rope into a filthy pit, where he continued up to the neck in mud, as they intended to choke him.

As he was in this condition, a favourite servant of the king's, an Ethiopian* born, went and told Zedekiah how they had treated the prophet; giving it as his opinion, that his great men and favourites had not done well in the aggravation of his misfortune, by exposing him to death, so much more grievous than that which he was reasonably to expect in his chains.

This conduct of the servant inducing the king heartily to repent his having left the prophet to the discretion of his enemies, he ordered the Ethiopian to take thirty trusty men out of his family, with ropes, and whatever he should find necessary for saving of him, and to join with them in getting him out of the pit with all possible expedition.

The servant did as he was ordered, and set the prophet at liberty; who was soon after this brought privately to the king, and had this question put to him; whether or no he could procure him from heaven any present relief under his miserable circumstance? The prophet answered him that he could; but that people would neither believe him, nor follow his counsels, adding in words to this effect: "All your pretended friends are my mortal enemies: they look upon me as a false

wretch, and are at this instant in a conspiracy to destroy me; and where are those impostors now, that deluded the people into a belief that they were out of danger from the Babylonians? So that by telling you the very truth, I may endanger my life."

The king, upon this, promised the prophet upon oath, that he would neither take away his life himself nor suffer any of his people to do it.

Jeremiah took his word and honour for it, and advised him by all means to deliver up the city into the hands of the king of Babylon; this was the only way in the world to be safe in his own person, to avoid the imminent danger he was in; preventing the burning of the temple, and the laying of the city level with the ground. He assured him, moreover, by the special direction of God himself, that if he pursued any other measures, all the calamities that should ensue upon his miscarriages, with the utter ruin of himself, his family, and his people, would be charged to his account.

The king then told him, that he had a great inclination to take his counsel for the common good; but was afraid lest some of his friends that were already gone over to the Babylonians, should accuse him to Nebuchadnezzar, and put him in danger of his life. The prophet bade him not fear on that account; for if he delivered up the city, neither himself, nor his wives, his children, or the temple itself, should suffer any thing.

After these words the king dismissed the prophet, with a charge not to make any discovery, even to the princes themselves, of what had passed in this conference; but if any come to have a hint that there had been such a meeting, and inquire into the business, it might be pretended that the prophet came to move the king for his liberty.

The prophet did as he was ordered, and gave that answer to all the people that asked him his business with Zedekiah.

^{*} Josephus mentions, that Solomon, amongst other merchandise, brought slaves from Ethiopia; which was afterward the practice of the Greeks and Romans. Such a slave probably Ebed-melech was; called an eunuch, or officer of the king's house.

CHAPTER HI.

The taking of Jerusalem .- Cruelties exercised upon Zedekiah .- Conquest and captivity of the Egyptians .- Miraculous story of Daniel, Shadruch, Meshach, und Abednego.-Preferment of Daniel for interpreting dreams .-Death of Nebuchadnezzar.

During these transactions the king of Babylon went on vigorously with the siege; his works were finished, and his towers carried up so high as to command the town and beat the defendants from the walls; and these preparations were made round the city in order for a general assault. The place was as resolutely defended as it was vigorously assailed, the besieged having plague and famine to contend with in the town, as well as enemies and other difficulties without. stood firm against all stratagems and machines, opposing one instance to another, as if the dispute had been matter of skill and art, as well as force; the besiegers' business being to take the city, and the safety of the besieged consisting in eluding or diverting the plots and endeavours of the enemy.

This contest lasted eighteen months; but in the end, for want of provisions within the town, and of numbers to maintain it, against the multitudes of besiegers, furnished with all manner of arms and warlike instruments, they were reduced to the necessity of delivering it up.

It was taken in the eleventh year, and the ninth day of the fourth month of the reign of Zedekiah, by the commanders to at Riblah.* The captains, with the rest

it was the most pleasant place in all Syria, here

Nebuchadnezzar lay, to attend the success of the

siege of Jerusalem, to send his army proper supplies, and to intercept any relief that might come

to the besieged .- Pat. ich's Commentary.

of the soldiery, went into the temple, which king Zedekiah perceiving, he took his wives, children, commanders, and friends, and they all fled away privately by a narrow passage toward the desert. But the Babylonians getting intelligence of this escape, by means of deserters, they made after them early the next morning, and overtook and surrounded them at a place not far from Jericho.

Zedekiah's friends and companions in his flight, seeing the enemy advance toward them, quitted their master, and ran several ways to avoid personal danger. The king being in a manner abandoned, with his wives and children, and a small number of his company, fell into the bands of the enemy, who presently carried them to the king of Babylon.

+ It is a hard matter to conceive how the besieged could make their escape, seeing that the Chaldeans had begirt the city round about. Josephus indeed gives us this account: "that, as the city was taken about midnight, the captains with the rest of the soldiers, went directly into the tem-" ple; which king Zedekiah perceiving, he took his wives, children, commanders, and friends, and they slipt all away together, by a narrow passage, to-wards the wilderness." But then what this passage was, is still the question. The Jews indeed think, that there was a subterraneous passage from the palace to the plains of Jericho, and that the king and his courtiers might endeavour to make their escape that way. Dion, it is true, tells us, that in the last siege of Jerusalem, the Jews had covert ways, which went under the walls of the city, to a considerable distance into the country, out of which they were wont to sally and fall upon the Romans that were straggling from their camp; but since neither Josephus nor the sacred historian takes notice of any such subterraneous conduit at this siege, we may suppose that the Chaldeans having made a breach in the wall, the besieged got away privately between the wall and the outworks, in a passage which the enemy did not suspect. The words in the Second Book of Kings are:— They went by the way of the gate, between the two walls, which is by the king's garden, which in Jeremiah are hus expressed:—"They went by the way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls:' so that, as the king's garden faced the country, very likely there was some very private and imperceptible gate, through which they might attempt to escape, and the besiegers perhaps might not keep so strict watch at that part of the town, (especially in the hurry of storming it,) because it led to the plain, and made their escape in a manner impracticable.- Jewish Hist., Patrick's, Le Clerc's, and Calmet's Commentaries.

whom the care of the siege was committed by Nebuchadnezzar, who at that time was Riblah was a city of Syria, in the country of Hamath, which country is the nearest to Judea, and which city, according to St Jerome, was the same with what was afterwards called Antioch; and, as

than he upbraided him with perfidy and in- bylon. gratitude, in words to the following effect: "Did not you promise me to manage the power and authority that I put you in possession of, for my advantage, for making you a king in room of Jehoiachin? whereas you have employed the credit and interest that I gave you in opposition to your patron and benefactor. But God, who is great and just, for the punishment of your treachery and ingratitude, hath now made you my prisoner."

When the king had thus severely reproached him, he immediately caused his children and his friends to be put to death before his face, and in the sight of the rest of the captives; after which he ordered Zedekiah's eyes to be put out,* and his

* Cutting out one or both of the eyes has been frequently practised in Persia and other parts of the East, as a punishment for treasonable offences. It is mentioned by Bruce as one of the capital punishments used in Abyssinia; it does not often prove fatal, though performed in the coarsest manner with an iron forceps, or pincers. Xenophon tells us that Cyrus was accustomed to inflict this penalty on certain offenders; and Ammianus Marcellinus mentions, that Sapor, king of Persia, banished Arsaces, whom he had taken prisoner, to a certain castle after having pulled out his eyes. In 1820, Mr Rae Wilson met at Acre with numerous individuals who exhibited marks of the vengeance of the late pacha Hadjee Achmet, from his sanguinary cruelties fitly surnamed Djezzar, or the Butcher. They were disfigured in various ways, by a hand amputated, an eye torn out, or a nose which had been split, or partly or totally cut off. In the Missionary Register for 1827 we are told that in the winter of 1826 two emirs had their eyes burnt out, and their tongues in part cut off, by the emir Bechir, the prince of Mount Lebanon, their uncle, on account of their having been concerned in some disturbances against his government. Other instances might be adduced as exemplifications of this barbarous punishment inflicted by Oriental despots,—the recital of which is calculated to rouse the indignant feelings of the human bosom. We shall merely mention the following as given by Chardin of a king of Imiretta, who lived in this condition. Hearing a complaint of continual wars, "I am sorry for it," replied the king, "but I cannot help it: for I am a poor blind man; and they make me do what they themselves please. I dare not discover myself to any one whatever; I mistrust all the world; and yet I surrender myself to all, not during to offend any body, for fear of being assassinated by every body." This poor prince, says Chardin, is young and well shaped : and he en us.

Nebuchadnezzar no sooner beheld him person to be carried away in chains to Ba-

This proceeding verified the two prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; which Zedekiah so little regarded because there appeared something of a contradiction between them; the former foretelling that he should be taken captive, and being carried to Babylon, should speak with the king himself, and see him face to face: but Ezekiel's prediction was, that he should be carried away to Babylon, and should not see him; which he could not do there, after he was deprived of his sight.+ Thus was rendered extinct the kings of the race of David, after a succession of one and twenty kings, during the space of five hundred and fourteen years, six months, and ten days, including the twenty years' reign of Saul, who was of another tribe.

Nebuchadnezzar, after obtaining this great victory, sent Nebuzar-adan, his commander-in-chief, to Jerusalem, with orders to pillage the temple and burn it; to do the like to the palace; and after laying the city level with the ground, to carry away the people captive to Babylon. In the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, Nebuzar-adan put his instructions into execution; and took away out of the temple all the vessels of gold and silver, Solomon's great laver, with the brazen pillars, and their chapiters, with the golden tables and candlesticks; and after this general plunder, he first set the temple on fire,

always wears a handkerchief over the upper part of his face, to wipe up the rheum that distils from the holes of his eyes; and to hide such a hideous sight from those who come to visit him .- See Bruce, Paxton, and Calmet.

[†] This may serve to convince even the most ignorant, of the power and wisdom of God, and of the constancy of his counsels, through all the various ways of his operations; it may likewise show us that God's foreknowledge of things is certain, and his Providence regular, in the ordering of events; besides, it holds forth a most exemplary instance to us, of the danger of giving way to the motions of incredulity and folly that take from us the means of discerning the judgments that threat-

and then laid the palace and the city in ashes.

This happened on the first day of the fifth month; the eleventh of Zedekiah, and the eighteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The temple was burnt four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days from the building of it; one thousand and sixty-two years, six months, and ten days, from the Israelites' coming out of the land of Egypt; one thousand nine hundred fifty years, six months, and ten days from the deluge; and three thousand five hundred and thirteen years, six months, and ten days from the creation of the world.

Upon the destruction of Jerusalem, and the transportation of the people, Nebuzaradan took the following persons prisoners with him.

There was the high-priest Seraiah,* and after him, Zephaniah, who was the next priest in dignity; three head keepers of the temple; the first eunuch of the bedchamber, with seven of the king's friends, beside the king's secretary, and other men of note, to the number of sixty; which were brought altogether to the king, who was then at Riblah, a city of Syria.

The king caused the heads of the highpriest, and the great men, to be struck off in that city; but the multitude of the prisoners, together with Zedekiah himself, he ordered to be bound, and carried captive to Babylon, together with Jehozadak, the high-priest, to be taken and bound along with them.

Having gone through the royal line, and the succession of kings, from father to son, it will be necessary to observe the same method with the high-priests, who, from time to time, in a continued succession under those kings, exercised the sacerdotal office.

The first pontifex after the building of Solomon's temple was Zadok. After him came his son Ahimaaz; and after Ahimaaz, Azariah; and so forward. Joram, Phinehas, Sudeas, Julus, Jotham, Urias, Nerius, Oseas, Saddumus, Elcius, Sareas, and Jehozadak, who was carried away to Babylon. All these handed down the pontificate in a continued succession in their families, from generation to generation.

Upon the king's return to Babylon, Zedekiah was committed to prison, where he died, and afterward had the honour of a royal sepulchre.

The holy vessels the king took out of the temple, he dedicated to his idols; allotted habitations to the people in Babylon, and set Jehozadak at liberty.

Now Nebuzar-adan, the general that brought away the people prisoners, left the poorer sort of people, and the deserters, under the command of Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, an eminent person both for generosity and justice, who allotted his prisoners such a proportion of ground to improve and live upon, on condition of paying a certain tribute to the king.

The prophet Jeremiah was also discharged from his imprisonment;† and the king having given order to the governor to take a particular care of him, Gedaliah proposed to the prophet to go with him to Babylon, as it was but reasonable that the king should be at the charge of his journey; or if he did not approve of that place, desired he would nominate any other, and he would write to the king about it.

The prophet's answer was, that he had no mind to remove at all, but rather stay where he was, and take his part in the miserable ruins of his native country.

Nebuzar-adan, being informed how the prophet stood affected, gave Gedaliah a

^{*} The person whom Jeremiah had desired to read an account of his prophecies to the Jews, then in captivity, and for which he was properly calculated from the nature of his office.

[†] The prophet was treated in this respectful manner by the Chaldeans, on account of the repeated predictions he had made in the favour of that people, and the many exhortations he had given the Jews to submit to their authority.

strict charge to see him well provided for; made him several considerable presents bimself, and so left him, and returned to Babylon.

Jeremiah upon this made choice of Mizpah * for the place of his abode, having first obtained of Nebuzar-adan Baruch's liberty, as well as his own, whom he took for his companion.

Baruch was the son of Neriah, a person nobly born, and perfectly well skilled in the language of his country.

The burning and the sacking of Jerusalem, and the return of the Babylonians into their own country, was by this time made known to all the deserters that had left the city in the time of the siege; and so they gathered together from all places in throngs to Gedaliah at Mizpah.

The principal men among them were Johanan, the son of Kareah; Jezaniah, and Seraiah, with some others. And besides these, there was Ishmael, a person of royal blood, but of a false and malicious disposition.

This man, in the time of the siege, fled to Baalis, king of the Ammonites, for sanctuary, where he had continued ever

Upon the application of these people to Gedaliah, he gave them an invitation to continue there, and to plant; for they might live quietly, and at ease, without any danger from the Babylonians; binding himself by an oath to stand by, and assist them, if any man should offer to molest or trouble them. And for their farther encouragement he thus addressed them.

"Do but you resolve among yourselves fitting up habitations; only you must take

When he had given them this encouragement and assurance, he left every man at liberty to dispose of himself at his own discretion, and to choose for his residence what place he pleased.

The report of Gedaliah's generosity, humanity, and tenderness, towards the fugitives, who had applied themselves to him for refuge, gained him so great a reputation with all the neighbouring nations, that they repaired to him from all parts, and quickly made up a considerable plantation; for they had lands assigned them, upon condition only of paving a certain acknowledgment to the king of Babylon.

Johanan and the rest of the great men had a very high esteem for the courtesy of Gedaliah to the planters, and therefore in formed him in friendship and respect, that there was a conspiracy carried on against him, between Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, and Ishmael; that Ishmael was to assassinate him in a treacherous manner; who, being a branch of the royal family, intended to assume the government of the Israelites.+

what town or place you would settle in, and you shall have some of my people with you to assist you in preparing and

care not to slip the season of providing for the next vintage and harvest, that you may not want corn, wine or oil next winter for your subsistence."

^{*} This city, to which Jeremiah thought proper to retire, had been a place of great estimation in the time of the Judges, but falling to decay, was rebuilt many years after their time by king Asa. It was situated on the horders of Judah and Benjamin, and was, at this time, the residence of Gedaliah.

⁺ That Ishmael, who was of the blood-royal of Judah, should attempt to take away the life of Gedaliah, is no wonder at all. His envy of the other's promotion, and his ambition to make himself a king, might be strong incitements to what he did; but why Baalis should have any hand in so black a design, we can hardly imagine any other reason than the aucient and inveterate hatred which the Ammonites always had against the Hebrews, and therefore this king of theirs, seeing that the Jewish nation was, at this time, in a manner brought to nothing, was minded to take re-venge for all the injuries that his ancestors had received from them, and to give the finishing stroke to their ruin, by cutting off their governor, and so dispersing the remains of that unhappy people, which was now gathered together at Mizpah. But, whatever their views might be, it is certain that they put their design in speedy execution; for the murder of Gedaliah happened but two months after the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, viz. in the seventh month, which is Tisri, and answers in part to our September and October, and on the thirtieth day of the month.

They gave it as their opinion, that the ready way to secure Gedaliah against this practice, would be for them privately to despatch Ishmael; which, with his leave, they would undertake, as they were afraid, if this mischief was not timely prevented, it would prove inevitably the ruin of all the Israelites in the end.

Gedaliah informed them, that he could not believe it possible for any man to be so barbarous and ungrateful, that lay under so many obligations to the contrary; neither could it enter into his head, that a man who was never known to do any such thing under the provocation of his necessities, should now be in a plot to destroy that person himself, whom, by all the ties of honour and hospitality, he was obliged to defend and preserve, though with the hazard of his own life, if it should have been attempted by any other man whatsoever.

To sum up the affair, he told them, that, admitting the information to be true, he had much rather lose his own life than take away the life of any man that had committed himself to his trust.

Johanan, and his companions, finding, from this declaration, that all they said was to no purpose, they went their way.

About thirty days after, Ishmael, with ten of his friends, paid a visit to Gedaliah at Mizpah, where they were received with all the freedom and respect imaginable. They drank very plentifully, till Gedaliah and his companions were intoxicated; which the other party observing, they took the opportunity of falling upon them, and without any difficulty killed the master of the house, and all the rest of the guards.

It was now the dead of the night, and all the people, as well soldiers as others, securely asleep; so that they made the same havoc in the streets as they had done at Gedaliah's just before, destroying and murdering all they could find, whether Jews or Babylonians, without any distinction.

The next day there came up to the city a company of about fourscore men out of the country, with presents for Gedaliah, knowing nothing as yet of the massacre. As soon as Ishmael saw them, he called them into Gedaliah's, shut the doors upon them, and cut their throats in the palace, and caused their bodies afterward to be thrown into a pit,* where they might lie concealed.

There was not a man of that number that escaped, except a few that promised to make discovery of goods, clothes, and corn, that were concealed under ground, upon their condition of being reprieved.

Some of them were spared upon these terms; but the common people of Mizpah, men, women, and children, were all carried away; and among the rest, the daughters of Zedekiah, which Nebuzar-adan had left under the care of Gedaliah.

Ishmael immediately went away with the news of this exploit to the king of the Ammonites; but Johanan, with the rest of the leading men, hearing of the horrid massacre at Mizpah, and the death of Gedaliah, were so incensed, that, raising all the men they could muster by their respective influence, they joined in the pursuit of Ishmael, whom they overtook at the fountain of Hebron.

The very sight of the pursuers rejoiced the hearts of the prisoners that Ishmael

Commentary, and Prideaux's Connection.

for that day the Jews have kept as a fast, in commemoration of this calamity (which indeed was the completion of their ruin) ever since — Calmet's

^{*} The word rendered 'pit,' signifies a bason, cistern, or reservoir; a large pit for receiving rain water, which Asa, who built and fortified Mizpah at the time he was at war with Baasha king of Israel, caused to be made in the midst of the city, in order that the people might not be in want of so necessary an article in case of a siege. Reservoirs of this kind were much in use in Palestine, as St Jerome tells us in his Commentary upon Amos iv. 7, 8. Each private family seems to have had one of these pits or reservoirs for its own use. 'Drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern,' his pit or reservoir, says Rabshakeh to the people of Jerusalem, Is. xxxvi. 16.—Dr Blayney.

was carrying away with him; for suspect- expect the same fate that had befallen ing them at first sight to be friends, coming to their assistance, they went over immediately, one and all, to the party of Johanan; but Ishmael, with only eight of his companions, fled to the king of the Ammonites.

Johanan, in the mean time, with the people he had taken from Ishmael, marched to a place that is called Chimham,* and there they staid one day, thinking to fly into Egypt, lest the Babylonians, in a rage for the murder of their governor, should fall upon them; however, for their better security, they took up a resolution to consult Jeremiah what course to take.+ Accordingly they put the question to him; promising upon oath to act in strict conformity with his advice.

The prophet assured them he would do his utmost for their satisfaction; and upon the tenth day after this application, God appeared to him, and bade him go and tell Johanan, and the rest of the commanders, that if they continued where they were, he would assist and secure them against any harm from the Babylonians, of whom they were so much afraid; but if after this warning they went into Egypt, they might their brethren before them.

This was the message the prophet delivered them by God's express direction, though they could hardly believe it to be the will of God that they should continue where they were; taking it rather for an invention of the prophet's, in favour of Baruch his disciple, in order to expose them to the wrath of the Babylonians; so that Johanan and the rest of the people, in contempt of God's word by his prophet, went away into Egypt, and carried Jere miah and Baruch along with them.

Upon their arrival thither, it was revealed from heaven to the prophet, that the king of Babylon should bring an army into Egypt, and Jeremiah was commanded to tell the people that Egypt should be taken, t when part of them should be killed, and afterwards the rest should be carried away captives to Babylon. § For,

^{*} This place may be supposed, from 2 Sam. xix. 38. to have been anciently given by king David to Chimham, the son of old Barzillai the Gileadite, and which, at this time, bore his name, though near five hundred years after the first donation. It was in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, about two leagues from Jerusalem, and hither the poor people betook themselves, because it was at a much farther distance from Babylon than Mizpah, and in their straight way to Egypt, in case they should determine to go thither, as they seemed inclinable to do, because there they supposed they should have no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, Jer. xlii. 14. -Stuckhouse.

⁺ Sufficiently humbled by the destruction of their country, and struck with the captivity of their brethren, the remnant of the Jews, who were not carried into Babylon, were awakened into a sense of Almighty power, and an humble supplication of his mercy. Adversity is the best school for wisdom, and the mind, though so hardened in error, naturally looks up to the Divine Being, as its only support on the appearance of calamity; un observation which the behaviour of the Jews upon this occasion sufficiently verified.

I The Almighty wisdom having determined to settle the Jews among the Chaldeans for some time, till the captivity had brought them to a proper knowledge of their sins, here expresses his particular disapprobation of their having any connection with the Egyptians, whom they might in reality consider as the source of all they had suffered, since the superstitious ceremonies of that people was the principal cause of their corruption. and consequently of their being forsaken by their divine protector. From this it must not, however be inferred, that the Chaldeans were not an idolatrous people; for, on the contrary, they were equally remarkable with the Egyptians for the number of their idols; but the Jews having been before under subjection to the Egyptian empire, the Lord thought it most proper, if it may be presumed to judge of unerring wisdom, to give them a change of masters, to make a deeper impression of their disobedience, and to manifest his own power, in redeeming them out of the hands of the two most mighty empires at that time in being

After this we have no further notice of the prophet Jeremiah. St Jerome, in the Life of this prophet, and Dorotheus, in his Synopsis of the lives and deaths of the prophets and apostles, tell us that he was stoned to death in Egypt by his own renegado countrymen, the Jews, for preaching against their idolatry; it appears indeed by the account we have of their behaviour, Jer. xliv 16. that they were bent both against him and his reproofs; and therefore it was the more likely that they were the authors of his death, than, as some say, the Egyptians were, for his prophesying against them and their king Pharaoh-hophra. For the Egyptians, according to the same tradi-

in the fifth year after the destruction of number of Jewish youths, who were emi-Jerusalem, and the three and twentieth of nent for their birth and beauty, to be Nebuchadnezzar, he made an inroad into Cœlo-syria; and upon subduing it, carried his victorious army into the country of the Ammonites and Moabites: whom when he had subjected, he made a furious incursion into Egypt, killed the reigning king, set up another in his place, and the Jews whom he found there were carried away a second time prisoners to Babylon.

Such was the wretched fate of the Hebrews, who, in consequence of their disobedience of the divine will, were twice carried away beyond the Euphrates; for the ten tribes were first transported by the Assyrians out of Samaria, in the reign of Hoshea; and the other two, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Chaldeans and the Babylonians, upon the taking of Jerusalem.

Now Shalmaneser transplanted the Cuthites into the country of the Israelites, out of the heart of Media and Persia; and they were called Samaritans from the name of the place into which they were transplanted; but the king of Babylon carried away the other two tribes, without introducing any other in their stead.

And this was the reason that Judea, with Jerusalem, and the temple, lay wholly abandoned for the space of seventy years.

The time betwixt the captivity of the ten tribes, and the transmigration of the other two, was one hundred and thirty years, six months, and ten days.

The king of Babylon appointed a select

tion, having, by the prophet's prayers, been freed from the crocodiles, which very much infested them, had him in such great honour and esteem, that in testimony thereof they buried him in one of their royal sepulchres. The truth is, Jeremiah was, all his life-time, exposed to the ill treatment of the Jews, whose irregularities and sad apostasy he was

always reproving; and therefore the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, in the encomium which he gives of this prophet, seems to draw his character from the persecutions he endured; 'They entreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet sanctified in his mother's womb.

trained up for the service of his court.

To this end he procured them the best tutors that could be found, and ordered divers of them to be set apart for the practice of music, vocal and instrumental.

He sent them their meat from his own table, and took great care to have them instructed in the Chaldean discipline and learning, in which they made a very considerable progress in a short time.

There were four of Zedekiah's relations in the number, whose names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; but the Babylonians changed their names, and called Daniel, Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego.*

The king had a great esteem for them all, both on account of the sweetness of their disposition, and the extraordinary force of their understanding.

Daniel thinking the voluptuous fare of the Babylonish court improper for persons in the condition of himself and his countrymen, they entreated the eunuch that had the care of them, to use those delicacies which the king sent them from his own table, for the service of himself and his family; as pulse, or dates, or any ordinary food, would be to them full as sat-The eunuch told them that he isfactory. would willingly gratify them; but if they should grow lean, upon such an abstemious way of living, look less amiable, or

^{*} It is very remarkable, that as all their former names related to the true God, so all the names, which on this occasion were imposed upon these four Jewish youths, had some reference or other to Babylonish idols. Daniel, in Hebrew, signifies 'God is my judge ;' Belteshazzar, in Chaldee, is 'the treasure of Baal:' Hananiah, in Hebrew, is 'well-pleasing to God;' Shadrach, in Chaldee, the 'inspiration of the sun:' Mishael, in Hebrew, 'proceeding from God;' Meshach, in Chaldee, 'belonging to the goddess Sheshach:' Azariah, in Hebrew, 'God is my help;' and Abednego, in Chaldee, the 'servant of Nego,' i. e. the sun, or morning star, both deities among the Babylonians, and so called because of their brightness.—Cale which on this occasion were imposed upon these and so called because of their brightness .- Calmet's Commentary.

he was afraid the king might have some suspicion of the matter, and take offence at it; which would endanger his life, especially as those who lived upon daintier food would appear more ruddy and healthy than themselves.

As they found the eunuch not so obstinate in opposing their request as they imagined he would have been, they pressed him to make the experiment only for ten days; and after that time, if he found the change did not so well agree with them as their former allowance, and that they did not keep their health, colour, and habit of body that they had before, he might bring them back again to the king's prescribed method of living.

The eunuch was prevailed upon to make trial of it; and when he found them so far from being the worse for the alteration, that they grew more vigorous upon it, both in the disposition of their bodies and minds, he made no longer a scruple of complying with their desires, but he gave them what they demanded, and kept the king's allowance to himself.

This change agreed so well with Daniel and his friends, that comparatively they seemed to be better provided for than the rest, and all their faculties were better adapted either for study or labour; being neither surfeited with variety, nor rendered effeminate by luxury.

By this temperate way of living, their spirits were kept clear and active, as appeared by their wonderful improvement in the Hebrew, as well as the Chaldean learning; but Daniel's progress was amazing, for he had got such an insight into the arts, that he took upon him the expounding of dreams, and had many times visions of his own to work upon.

About two years after the destruction of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar had a vision, and a revelation from God in his sleep of the meaning of it; but afterwards, when he came to rise from his bed, he had utterly forgot it. Upon which he imme-

appear in a less agreeable habit of body, | diately sent for his learned men, as Chaldeans, Magi, prophets, and told them, that he had a strange dream, but it was now utterly out of his head, and therefore required them to tell him what it was, and what was the signification of it?

> They made him answer, that as to the first part of his proposition, it was a thing not to be done. But if he would be pleased to tell them the dream, they would be answerable to give him the interpretation of it.

> The king in a rage commanded them. without farther ceremony, to tell him his dream, or they should die for it; * but as they could not undertake it, they were ordered to be put to death.+

> * Though the Chaldeans were remarkably expert in the interpretation of dreams, which they undertook to discover by some particular marks, as well as to foretell future events by the revolution of the heavenly bodies, yet here they declar-ed the impossibility of knowing a dream which they never heard of, and the unreasonableness of requiring an interpretation of what the king had utterly forgot; a circumstance which, they told the king, was entirely unprecedented, and never demanded by any of the preceding princes, on account of its impossibility.
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> † The king of Persia was then, as he is still, an

absolute monarch, having the lives and property of his subjects entirely at his disposal. His will is the only law; every word that emanates from the throne is implicitly obeyed, let it be ever so unjust, capricious, or bad. His passive subjects have neither the opportunity nor the desire of appeal; and let him once resolve on taking the life or possessions of any, even the greatest personages in his kingdom, neither loyalty to his person, nor eminent merit, are of any avail to arrest the execution of the despot's wishes. Seljook, who sat on the throne of Persia, was a prince of great reputation, but he fell into habits of the greatest intemperance, insomuch that, on one occasion, in a fit of intoxication, he ordered his queen to come into his presence, and, on her refusal, commanded one of his slaves to bring her The cruel mandate was obeyed, and the head of the beautiful, but ambitious princess, was presented in a golden charger to her drunken husband, as he sat carousing with his dissolute companions. Some officers, who were present, expressing their feelings at the horrid deed, were instantly put to death by the arbitrary prince. In a manner still more summary did Sofi, another king of Persia, punish an astrologer who seemed to reflect on the royal proceedings. When that Shah and all his great men were assembled to see some criminals cut in pieces—a punishment very common in that country, and the chief of the astrologers was there among the rest, the Shah

the wise men were all to be put to death, and to reflect, that he and his relations were also in danger, upon the same account, he went to Arioch, the captain of the king's guards, to learn what crime they were condemned for.

The captain informed him, that the king had a dream, which he himself had forgotten, and that they were to die because they could not tell him what it was.

Daniel made answer, that if he could procure them a reprieve for one night only he would not despair of giving him the satisfaction he required; for he had some hope that God would that very night be prevailed upon to enable him to do it.

The captain gave the king an account of this proposal; whereupon the execution was respited, to try what good was to be done upon that experiment.

Daniel, with his companions, went into his bed-chamber, and spent that whole night in prayer to God, for the means of resolving the question, and for the delivering those people from death that were now fallen under the king's displeasure, by laying before him the particulars of the last night's dream, which was now out of his memory.

God was pleased, upon the intercession of Daniel, both in compassion to the miserable, and out of tenderness for the prudence of Daniel's mediation, to make known, not only the dream itself, but the signification of it; to the end that he might communicate the whole matter to the king.

Daniel was so transported with this revelation, that he got up early in the morning, gave his brethren a word of comfort,

viewing attentively the countenances of his courtiers, observed that the principal astrologer shut his eyes at every stroke of the sabre, as not able to behold so horrible a slaughter; he thereupon called to the governor who sat near him to put out the eyes of that dog who was at his left hand, since he did not use them; which was executed in an instant on the unhappy astrologer. - Jamieson.

When Daniel came to understand that being now brought to the last point of despair, and thinking of nothing but death, bade them take courage, and hope the best, for that all things were now secure.

> When they had given God thanks together for his fatherly care and pity over them, Daniel went to Arioch by break of day, to carry him to the king, with assurance he should now have all the particulars laid before him of his late dream.

Upon Daniel's admittance to the king, he first informed him, "That it was not conceit he entertained of his own wisdom. as if he knew more than the Chaldeans and the Magi; or any design of a reproach upon them, for not being able to resolve a question which he could explain, that made him engage in this matter; for, said he, I am not a person to pretend to more skill and understanding than my neighbours, but it is purely the work of God, in pity to the miserable, and in mercy to my prayers, for the lives and safety of myself and my friends, that he hath revealed this dream to me, and laid open the meaning of it.

"I have not been so solicitous for the safety of myself, and my companions under your displeasure, as for your honour and glory; in case of putting so many good and worthy men to death, contrary to right and justice, merely for not being able to do a thing which is utterly impossible for flesh and blood to do; or for any but a supernatural power to accomplish.

"You were thinking with yourself what would become of the empire of the world when you were gone, and who should succeed to it. Now the dream you had was a kind of a resolution upon that inquiry; for God showed you in your sleep those that were to rule after you. You dreamt you saw a large image,* or statue, stand-

^{*} Grotius accurately observes, that the image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with admiration of worldly pomp and splen-dour; whereas the same monarchies were repre-

ing upright; the head was gold; the signified yourself, and other kings of shoulders and arms silver; the belly and the thighs brass; the legs and the feet iron. You saw then a stone broken off from a mountain that fell upon this image, overthrew it, and broke it so small, that the dust of the gold, silver, brass, and iron, was as light as chaff, and carried away by a blast of wind to the furthermost parts of the earth; the stone growing so large during this time, that it lay like a mountain on the face of the earth.* This was your dream, and I come now to the interpretation of it. By the golden head is

sented to Daniel under the shape of fierce and wild beasts, (chap. vii.) as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny in the world.—Lowth.

* By these different emblems of metals and stone, God intended to signify to Nebuchadnezzar the several empires that were to be in the world. . The Assyrian or Chaldean is represented by gold, because it was the first, and the most magnificent, if not the most extensive, and Nebuchadnezzar being then upon the throne, is said to be head of it. That of silver is the Persian, founded by Cyrus, upon the ruins of the Chaldean, but inferior to the Chaldean in its duration at least, if not in its extent. That of brass is the Grecian, founded by Alexander, upon the ruins of the Persian, and its character is, that it should bear rule over all the earth, Dan. ii. 39. which was verified in its great founder; for, upon his return from India to Babylon, the ambassadors of almost all the known parts of the world resorted thither to pay their homage and acknowledgment of his dominion. That of iron is the Roman empire, which is distinguished by its breaking in pieces, and subduing all things, ver. 40: For, whilst it was in its full strength and vigour, under its consuls and first emperors, it brought under its dominion all the kingdoms and states that were then subsisting in Europe, Africa, and a great part of Asia; but, from that time, it became a mixture of iron and clay. Its emperors proved most of them vicious and corrupt, either by their tyranny, making themselves hateful to their subjects, or, by their follies and vices, con-temptible. Lastly, that of the stone cut out of the mountain is the fifth monarchy, or the kingdom of the Messias; which, against all the power and policy of the Roman empire, prevailed, not by an external force, but by the powerful preaching of the gospel, to the suppression and defeat of wickedness and impiety, idolatry and superstition, and it shall stand for ever, and never be destroyed, Dan. ii. 44. which can be said of no other kingdom but that of Jesus Christ, which, for these seventeen hundred years and upwards, has withstood the violence of persecutions, and all other contrivances formed against it, and has the sure promises of its Almighty founder on its side, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matt. xvi. 18.— Calmet's Commentary

Babylon before you: the two hands and shoulders portend that two kings shall destroy your empire; and afterward, their empire will be subverted by another king coming from the west in armour of brass; and he is to be subdued afterward by another in iron; which, in its nature, is stronger than gold, silver, or brass, and not to be resisted."

Nebuchadnezzar with astonishment acknowledged this to be his dream, and falling upon his face, adored Daniel like a god, and appointed divine honours to be paid him: nay, he was not satisfied without giving him the name of God; he also made him ruler over the whole province, joining several of his kindred with him in the same commission. This promotion was followed with such envy upon Daniel and his relations, that it had like to have cost them all their lives by a disgust the king took upon the following occasion.

He had caused to be made an image of gold, sixty cubits in height, and six in breadth, and placed it in the great plain of Babylon.+ He called together, upon the dedication of it, the princes, the great

⁺ Grotius is of opinion, that the image, which Nebuchadnezzar set up, was the figure of his father Nabopolassar, whom by this means he in-tended to deify; but others think that it was his own statue, which he erected to gain the adora-tions of his people in this form. We cannot however, in what we find Nebuchadnezzar saying to Daniel's friends, perceive that he any where upbraids them with contempt offered either to his person or his statue, but only that they would not serve his gods, nor worship the image which he had set up, Dan. iii. 14. and therefore others have imagined, that this was neither his own nor his father's statue, but that of Jupiter, which was afterwards found in the temple of Belus, when Xerxes plundered it of its immense riches, among which were several images of massy gold, but one more especially fifty feet high, which might be the same that Nebuchadnezzar consecrated in the plains of Dura. For, though that is said to have been sixty cubits, i. e. ninety feet high, yet we may suppose, that it stood upon a pedestal of fifty feet high, and so the image, and the pedestal together, might make ninety, otherwise there would be no proportion between its height and its breadth, according to the description we have of it in Dan. iii. 1 .- Prideaux's Connection.

men and officers out of all his dominions; making proclamation, that immediately upon hearing the sound of a trumpet, they should all fall down to worship his image;* and that whoever refused it, should be cast into the fiery furnace. + Upon the sounding of this trumpet, all the people fell down and worshipped, except the three friends of Daniel, who, refusing to do it, from a reverence to the laws of their country. and the religion of the true God, were informed against, and cast into the fire; but by a merciful Providence, and beyond all human imagination, their lives were preserved as if the flame itself had been conscious of the injustice of the sentence, and suspended its natural effect in favour of the innocent; for they were not so much as scorched with it.

* When we consider the strictness observed, even in the superstitious worship of the ancients, and the punishments decreed for the least inattention to it, we have a melancholy retrospect to make upon our own times, where, though we have been so highly blessed with the benefits of the gospel, we not only act in manifest contradiction to its tenets, but presume to ridicule, controvert, and despise them. The merits of a suffering Saviour are treated with contempt, and his very existence disputed by some members of his church, who should be the first, from the nature of their office, to adore his mission, and propagate his laws.

adore his mission, and propagate his laws.

† This kind of punishment was pretty common in these parts of the world, so that some will have it, that Abraham, before he departed from Chaldea, was made to undergo it, but escaped by a miraculous preservation. Of this furnace in particular, it is related that the king's servants having received the command to heat it seven times hotter, ceased not to make the oven hot with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood; so that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits; and passed through, and burnt the Chaldeans it found about the furnace.' This mode of punishment was not uncommon in the East so lately as the seventeenth century. Chardin in his travels, after speaking of the most common modes of punishing with death, says, "But there is still a particular way of putting to death such as have transgressed in civil affairs, either by causing a dearth, or by selling above the tax by a false weight, or who have committed themselves in any other manner. The cooks are put upon a spit and roasted over a slow fire, (see Jeremiah xxix. 22.), bakers are thrown into a hot oven. During the dearth in 1688, I saw such ovens heated on the royal square in Ispahan, to terrify the bakers, and deter them from deriving advantage from the general distress."

This extraordinary interposition of divine providence in their behalf, enhanced them greatly in the esteem of the king, who afterwards conferred on them many signal tokens of his favour.

Soon after this amazing event, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream, as surprising as the former; the substance of which, as interpreted by Daniel, was, that "he should be driven from his kingdom, live seven years amongst the beasts of the forest, and be afterwards restored to his former state and dignity."

. The king had put the question again to the Magi upon this vision also; but Daniel was the only person who could expound it; and according to his prediction, it succeeded in the event. His cessation from war (in which he had been long engaged) had by this time given him an opportunity of finishing his stately buildings at Babylon; and from the roof of his palace; taking a survey of these, as well as other monuments of his greatness, he became so intoxicated with pride and arrogance, that God, in punishment of his haughty mind, deprived him of his senses, and, for exalting himself above the state of men, reduced him to the condition of a beast.§

manner described by the prophet.—Paxton.

§ Origen, who was for resolving every thing that he could not comprehend in scripture, into allegory, was of opinion, that, under the name of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel intended to give us a representation of the fall of Lucifer; but the ac-

[†] If Nebuchadnezzar walked in some apartment of his palace, as we have it in our translation, it is not easy to account for the proud and rapturous exclamation which suddenly burst from his mouth—we can see no proper excitement, no adequate cause; but if, according to the true sense of the original, we suppose him walking upon the roof of his palace, which proudly rose above the surrounding habitations, and surveying the vast extent, the magnificence, and the splendour, of that great city, the mistress of the world—its walls of prodigious height and thickness—its hanging gardens, reputed one of the most astonishing efforts of art and power—its glittering palaces—the Euphrates rolling his majestic flood through the middle of the place, shut in on both sides by strong bulwarks and doors of brass; it was quite natural for such a man to feel elated with the sight, and indulge his pride and arrogance in the manner described by the prophet.—Paxton.

For seven years he lived abroad in the fields, eating grass like an ox, and taking up his lodging on the ground in the open air. But at the expiration of this time,

count of the punishment which befell this prince, is so often inculcated in the same chapter: foretold in the dream explained by the prophet; repeated by the voice from heaven; and all this published in a solemn declaration by the king himself after the recovery of his senses, that there is no manner of grounds to think of any figure, or allegory, in this piece of history. Nebuchadnez-zar's real metamorphosis into an ox, both as to his outward and inward form, is a notion too gross for any but the vulgar, who may be taken perhaps with such fictions of the poets; and what we have no need to recur to (thereby to multiply miracles to no purpose) from any words in the text, which will fairly admit of another interpretation. The metempsychosis of an ox's soul into Nebuchadnezzar's body, thereby to communicate the same motions, taste, and inclinations, that are observable in that animal, is a notion unknown to all antiquity; for, according to the doctrine of Pythagoras, such a transmigration was never made, until the body was actually dead; besides the manifest incongruity of supposing two souls, a rational and a brutal, animating the same prince, or the prince's soul departed from him, and become the substitute to a brute. A fascination, both in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar's subjects and in his own fancy and imagination, which might make them both believe that he was really changed into an ox, and had the figure of one, is a notion every whit as liable to exception. For, besides that it is difficult to conceive, how a deception of this kind could abide upon a whole nation for the space of seven years, the scripture takes notice of no evil spirit in this whole transaction, but imputes all to the sole power of God, who can humble the proud, and chastise the wicked, as he pleases. The most general, therefore, and most probable opinion is, that Nebuchadnezzar, by the judgment of God, was punished with hypochondriacal madness, which so disordered his imagination, that he fancied himself transformed into a beast, and was prompted to act like one. There is a distemper (not a very common one indeed, but what has befallen several) which naturalists and physicians call lycanthropy, when, by the power of a depraved imagination, and a distempered brain, a man really thinks that he is a wolf, an ox, a dog, or the like, and accordingly, in his inclinations, motions, and behaviour, cannot forbear imitating the particular creature which he fancies himself to be. In this manner Nebuchadnezzar, imagining that he was become an ox, walked upon all four, fed upon grass, went naked, lowed with his voice, and butted (as he thought;) with his horns; and, in short, did all the actions, as far as he was able, that a real ox is known to do. Hereupon his subjects, perceiving this change in him, took him, and bound him, (as madmen are wont to be treated) but, at last, he escaping out of their hands, fled to the fields, where he herded with the cattle, exposed to the cew of heaven, and the other inclemencies of the

when he became sensible of God's superior power and dominion, his senses returned to him again. His kingdom was restored, and he re-instated in his former majesty; whereupon he made this solemn and grateful acknowledgment: "And now I, Nebuchadnezzar praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase, when he pleases."

This king appears, from a review of his life, to have been an active prince, and much more fortunate than any of his ancestors. He died in the three and fortieth year of his age. Berosus, in the third book of his Chaldean History, makes mention of it in these words:

"Nebuchodonosor the father understanding that a certain great officer of his, to whom he had committed the government of Egypt, Coelo-syria, and Phoenicia, was fallen off from his allegiance, and not being in a condition of body himself to bear the fatigues of the war in his own person, he sent his son Nebuchodonosor, with part of his army, to reduce him to his obedience. He found him out; fought and overcame him, and so reduced the revolted provinces to their duty. The father in the mean time was taken away by a sickness at Babylon, in the one and twentieth year of his reign. The young prince was no sooner informed of the death of his father, than he took immediate care for the settling of his affairs in Egypt, and the rest of the provinces; re-

weather; where his neglected body became horrid and dreadful to behold; where his hair, and his nails, in process of time, grew in the hideous manner that the prophet had described them; and where his heart, that is, his apprehension, appetite, and inclinations, by the continuance of his distemper, became quite brutal, and of the same cast with the beasts that graze. Schenkius records a remarkable instance of this disease in a husbandman of Padua, who, imagining that he was a wolf, attacked, and even killed several persons in the fields; and when at length he was taken, he persevered in declaring himself a real wolf, and that the only difference consisted in the inversion of his skin and hair.—Stachhouse.

commending to some particular friends the charge of conveying his prisoners, Jews, Syrians, Phœnicians, and Egyptians, to Babylon, with the army and baggage; whilst he himself, with a small retinue, took his way thither over the desert. The government was reserved for him in the mean while, by the Chaldeans; and by the great men among them, in his absence, secured till his return; so that when he came to enter upon the administration, he was established in the full possession of his paternal empire. first thing he did was to make a commodious distribution of his captives into colonies; and after that, to adorn and illustrate the temple of Belus, and other religious places, with the spoils of war. He repaired and enlarged the ancient edifices of the city, and raised works upon the banks of the river, to prevent all approaches that way. He erected three walls within the bounds of the city, and as many without, all brick work; and when he had fortified the town after this remarkable manner, he beautified the gates with a curious frontispiece, like the finishing of the temple work; and erected another palace contiguous to that of his father, with great art and magnificence. In this building there were vast stones supported upon arches, that looked like mountains hanging in the air; and they were planted on the top with several sorts of trees, in a compliment to the queen, "who, being a Median, had a passionate desire to see some artificial resemblance of the gardens and rarities of her own country."*

Megasthenes, in the fourth book of his History of India, speaks of these garden works, and sets forth this king, both for his enterprise, and his performance, to

are said to have been finished in one year by the hands of two hundred thousand workmen. They were strengthened with two hundred and fifty towers, ten feet higher than the walls. Twenty-five gates of solid brass on every side of the great square, terminated an equal number of streets, which ran in straight lines from one side of the city to the other; so that the whole number of the streets were fifty, each fifteen miles long, of which twenty-five went one way, and twenty-five the other, directly crossing each other at right angles. On each side of the river was a quay, and a high wall built of brick and bitumen, of the same thickness as the walls that went round the city. In these walls, over against every street that led to the river, were gates of brass, and from them descents, by steps to the river, for the conveniency of the inhabitants who were obliged to pass the river in boats before the building of the bridge. These brazen gates were always open in the day time, and shut in the night.

A beautiful and magnificent bridge was in process of time constructed across the river, a furlong in length and thirty feet in breadth, adorned at each end with a splendid palace. But the most wonderful effort perhaps of imperial wealth and power, was the lake which the monarchs of Babylon caused to be dug near Sippara, to the west of the city, to secure it from the dreadful effects of the periodical inundations. This immense artificial bason was forty miles square, one hundred and sixty in compass, and thirty-five feet deep, according to Herodotus, and seventy-five according to Megasthenes. Into this lake was the whole river turned by a canal cut from the west side of it, till they had finished two artificial channels at a very considerable distance above the town, to receive the inundations of the river, occasioned by the periodical melting of the snow on the mountains of Armenia, which turned the course of these waters into the Tigris, before they reached Ba-

bylon.

On the west side of the river, within the city, near the new palace, rose, in majestic grandeur, the celebrated pensile gardens, terrace above terrace, sustained by vast arches raised upon other arches, till they equalled in height the walls of the city. These terraces were crowned with trees of the largest size, vigorously flourishing on the deep mould with which the arches were covered, and beautified with every plant and flower that was proper for a garden and pleasure.

Near the old palace, on the opposite side of the river, stood the temple of Belus; in the middle of which was a prodigious tower of a quadrangular form, half a mile in circuit, and a furlong in height. This astonishing structure is supposed by many writers to have been the celebrated tower of Babel, the building of which was interrupted by the confusion of tongues. The riches of this temple, in statues, tables, censers, cups, and other sacred vessels, all of massy gold, were immense. Among

^{*} To the above notice of Babylon, extracted from Berosus, we subjoin some additional particulars descriptive of this once stupendous and wealthy place. This magnificent city, the capital or beginning of Nimrod's kingdom, stood on a large plain, in a deep and rich soil, of a quadrangular form, and divided almost into two equal parts by the river Euphrates, The walls were built of brick, cemented with bitumen, with which the soil seems to have been saturated; their height was fifty cubits, and the breadth so great, that chariots, drawn by four horses, might pass one another on the top of them without danger. These prodigious walls embraced a circuit of sixty miles; and

himself, having subdued the greatest part of Libya, and likewise Iberia. Diocles makes mention of this king in the second

have been much superior to Hercules | book of his Persian History; and Philostratus, in the account he gives of the Phoenicians and the Indians, writes, that this prince, in the days of Ithobal king of

other images, was one of forty feet high, which weighed a thousand Babylonish talents. According to the calculation of Diodorus, this temple contained six thousand three hundred and fifty Attic talents of gold, which amounts to more than

twenty-one millions sterling.

Such was ancient Babylon, over the splendour, and magnificence, and extent of which, the heart of Nebuchadnezzar exulted, while he looked down upon it from the highest turret of his palace, and his lips exclaimed, 'Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' Exactly according with the truth of ancient history, are the accounts which the prophets of the Lord have left us of the greatness and strength of that haughty mistress of the nations, and oppressor of the whole earth. Isaiah pronounces her 'the glory of kingdoms; the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency; the golden city; the lady of kingdoms.' Jeremiah speaks of her 'broad walls,' and her 'brazen gates;' and calls her, by a most significant figure, 'the hammer of the whole earth;' and a 'destroying mountain which destroyed all the earth;' and says 'she was abundant in treasures, and dwelling on many waters;' and in another passage, he describes her as 'Jehovah's battle-axe and weapons of war, with which he brake in pieces the nations, and destroyed

This great and powerful city was so strong, both by nature and art, its inhabitants were so numerous and warlike, and its resources so many and various, that it was considered as impregnable. It seemed, says Orosius, to be almost equally incredible, that it could be built by the hands, or destroyed by the prowess of mortals. The Babylonians themselves were of the same opinion; they boasted that Babylon should remain the mistress of nations till the end of all things. saidst, I shall be a lady for ever, so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.-Thou saidst in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.' But the event proved that the pro-phets had not foretold the destruction of that splendid and powerful city in vain. The dreadful calamities which Babylon had brought upon so many cities and nations, to gratify her inordinate ambition, burst at last upon her own head, and overwhelmed her in complete and irretrievable ruin. The fearful threatenings of the prophet were literally fulfilled; 'Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell

there, and satyrs shall dance there; and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.' The Persians, says Strabo, destroyed a part of the city; time, and the carelessness of the Macedonians, destroyed another part; but the principal cause of its decline was, the building of Seleucia, about forty miles above Babylon, by Seleucus Nicanor, who is said to have erected this new city from dislike to the Babylonians, and to have drawn five hundred thousand persons from Babylon, for the peopling of this new city.

This rival seat of empire, by degrees robbed

Babylon of its glory and greatness, and even of its very name; for it is expressly called Babylon in some ancient authors. In the time of Curtius, it had declined a fourth part; it was reduced to de-solation in the days of Pliny; and when Jerome flourished, it was turned into a park, in which the kings of Persia were accustomed to take the

diversion of hunting.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, the ruins of ancient Babylon were visited by Rauwolf, a German physician, who gives the following mournful but instructive description of it. By a small village on the Euphrates, called Eulego, or Felugo, is the seat of the old Babylon, a day and a half's journey from Bagdat. The lands about it are so dry and desolate, that one may justly doubt the fertility of it, and the greatness of this city, if the vast ruins still to be seen did not banish all suspicion. There are still standing some arches of a bridge over the river, which is here half a mile broad, and exceeding deep: these arches are built of brick, and wonderfully compacted. A quarter of a mile beneath the village, in a plain, are the fallen ruins of a castle, and beyond that the ruins of the tower of Babel, half a German mile in compass, which is now a receptable of serpents and venomous creatures. A little above the fall of the Tigris into the Euphrates, is a city now called Trax, formerly called Apamea. All that travel over these plains will find vast numbers of the ruins of very ancient, great, and lofty buildings, arched towers and other similar structures of wonderful architecture. There is only one tower, which is called Daniel's, still entire and inhabited, from whence may be seen all the ruins of this once vast city; which sufficiently demonstrate the truth of what ancient writers have said of its greatness, by the vastness of their extent .- A noble Roman, Peter Delle Valle, in the year 1616, visited what are thought to be the ruins of ancient Babylon. In the middle of a vast and level plain, about a quarter of a league from the Euphrates, he found a heap of ruined buildings, like a huge mountain, the materials of which are so confounded together, that he knew not what to make of it. Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid which Strabo calls the tower of Belus, and is, in all probability, the tower of Nimrod in Babylon, or BaTyre, maintained a siege thirteen years against that town.

CHAPTER IV.

Nebuchadnezzar's successor releases king Jehoiachin.—Babylon is besieged by Cyrus and Darius.—Daniel expounds a vision to king Belshazzar.—Taking of Babylon.—Daniel obtains the favour of king Darius.—God works many deliverances for the prophet, and enables him to perform many wonders.

bel, as the place is still called. No marks of ruins appeared without that huge mass, to convince him that so great a city as Babylon had ever stood there; all he could discover within fifty or sixty yards of it, being only the remains here and there of some foundations of buildings; and the country round so flat and level, that it is difficult to believe it should be chosen for the situation of so great and noble a city as Babylon, or that it ever contained any remarkable buildings. Della Valle, however, was astonished to find so many remains of that renowned city, after the lapse of four thousand years since it was built, and that Diodorus Siculus tells us it was reduced almost to nothing in his time. Tavernier, a very celebrated traveller, discovered at the parting of the Tigris, a little way from Bagdat, the foundations of a city which seemed to be a large league in compass. Some of the walls were yet standing, upon which six coaches might go abreast; they were made of burnt brick, ten feet square, and three feet thick. The chronicles of the country say they are the remains of ancient Babylon; but Tavernier imagined they were the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, or of the tower of Babel. He adopts the opinion of the Arabs, and conceives them to be rather the remains of some tower built by one of their princes for a beacon to assemble his subjects in time of war; and this conjecture, in all probability, approaches nearest to the truth.

It is not one of the least remarkable circumstances related of Babylon, that we cannot learn, either from ancient writers, or modern travellers, where this renowned city stood, only in general, that it was situated in the province of Chaldea, upon the Euphrates, considerably above its confluence with the Tigris. Travellers have guessed, from the great ruins they have discovered in several parts of this country, that in this or that place Babylon once stood; but when we come to examine nicely the places they mention, we only learn that they were certainly in the wrong, and have mistaken the ruins of Seleucia, or some other great town. Mr Hanway declares, that the ruins of Babylon are now so much effaced, that hardly any vestiges of them remain to point out the situation.

By these accounts we see, (to use the words of Newton,) how punctually time hath fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon When it was converted into a chase for wild beasts to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words of the prophets, that the wild

EVIL-MERODACH, who succeeded to the throne of Babylon on the demise of Nebuchadnezzar his father, immediately on his accession released Jehoiachin, honoured him with many presents, took him into his confidence, and made him the chief governor of his palace.* His father indeed had broken his faith shamefully with

beasts of the desert, with wild beasts of the islands, should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses. One part of the country was overflow-ed by the river's having been turned out of its course, and never restored again to its former channel and thence became boggy and marshy, so that it might literally be said to be 'a possession for the bittern, and pools of water.' Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing, so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, which seemed, in some measure, to contradict the former. 'Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.' The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures; so that, 'their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces; and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant.' For all these reasons, 'neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there.' And when we find that modern travellers cannot now certainly discover the spot of ground whereon that imperial city once was situated, we may very properly say, How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations? Every purpose of the Lord hath he performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant; and the expression is no less true than sublime, that 'the Lord of hosts has swept it with the besom of destruction.'-Paxton.

* Jerome tells us, from an ancient tradition of the Jews, that Evil-merodach, having had the government of the Babylonish empire during his father's distraction, administered it so ill, that, as soon as the old king recovered from his malady, he put him in prison for it; and that the place of his imprisonment happening to be the same where Jehoiachin had long been confined, he there entered into a particular acquaintance and friendship with him; and that this was the cause of the great kindness which he now showed him. And since the old historical traditions of the Jews are often quoted in the New Testament, if this were such, it is not wholly to be disregarded; and that especially since the maladministrations charged upon Evil-merodach after his father's death, give sufficient reason to believe that he could not govern without them before. For he proved a very profligate and vicious prince, and for that reason was called Evil-merodach, that is, foolish Merodach; his proper name being only Merodach .-

Prideaux.

he had so frankly delivered up himself, his wife, children, and all his relations, upon honour only, for the saving of his country from utter ruin.

Evil-merodach died in the eighteenth month of his reign. His brother-in-law Neriglissar succeeded him; and when he had reigned four years, the kingdom fell by succession to his son Laborosoarchod,* who kept it only nine months; and after his death, it devolved on Belshazzar,+ the son of Evil-merodach, by the Babylonians called Naboandel.

* Laborosoarchod was in every thing the reverse of his father, being given to all manner of wickedness, cruelty, and injustice; to which, on his advancement to the throne, he let himself loose in the utmost excess, without any manner of restraint, as if the regal office, to which he was now advanced, were for nothing else but to give him a privilege of committing without control all the vile and flagitious actions that he pleased. Two acts of his tyrannical violence toward two of his principal nobility, Gobrias and Gadates, are particularly mentioned. The only son of the for-mer he slew at a hunting to which he had invited him, for no other reason but that he had thrown his dart with success at a wild beast when he himself had missed it; and the other he caused to be castrated, only because one of his concubines had

commended him for a handsome man.—Prideaux.

+ Great is the difference among historians and others who this Belshazzar (who is generally believed to be the same with the Nabonnedus in Berosus, and the Labynetus in Herodotus) was. Some will have him to be of the royal blood of Nebuchadnezzar, and others imagine that he was no way related to him. Some maintain that he was a Babylonian, and others affirm that he was a Mede; and of those who allow him to be of the royal family of Nebuchadnezzar, some will have it that he was his son, and others that he was his grandson; and therefore, to clear this matter, we must observe, 1st, that Belshazzar, be he who he will, was certainly of the seed of Nebuchadnezzar, because he is expressly called his son in several places of the 5th chapter of Daniel, and in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20. it is said, that Nebuchadnezzar and his children, or offspring, reigned in Babylon until the kingdom of Persia commenced. That according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, (chap. xxvii, 7.) the nations of the East were to serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his son's son, and therefore he must have had a son, and a son's son, successors to him in the throne of Babylon. 3dly, That as Evil-merodach was Nebuchadnezzar's son, of all the kings that reigned after him at Babylon, none but Belshazzar could be his son's son; for Neriglissar was only his daughter's husband, and Laborosoarchod was Neriglissar's son; so that neither of them was either son or grandson to Nebuchadnezzar. 4thly, That, according to

this prince, in making him a prisoner after |. Cyrus the king of the Persians, and Darius the king of the Medes, made war upon this prince; and while they lay before Babylon, there appeared to Belshazzar an extraordinary vision. As he was at supper, with his courtiers and concubines about him, together with all the splendid apparatus of a princely table, he called, in a frolic, for the sacred vessels out of his own temple, which Nebuchadnezzar deposited there, upon rifling the temple at Jerusalem, though he never had put them to any profane or private use.1

> Belshazzar was now warm in his cups, and entertaining himself and his company with profane speeches against the majesty of the true God; when in the height of his jollity there appeared a hand, writing certain syllables upon the wall; which put the king into such a terror, that he immediately called a council of cunning men and Chaldeans, and all sorts of diviners, (who among those barbarians value themselves upon a faculty of disclosing the meaning of prodigies, and the interpretation of dreams,) to find out the purport of the words that were there written upon the

> Herodotus, the last king of Babylon (who without doubt was Belshazzar, because, immediately after his death, the kingdom was given to the Medes and Persians, Dan. v. 28, 30, 31.) was son to the great queen Nitocris; but now Nitocris, to have a child that was grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, could be wife to no other than Evil-merodach; and therefore, putting all this together, it appears that Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, was the son of Evil-merodach, by Nitocris his queen, and consequently, son's son to Nebuchadnezzar: nor must it seem strange that we find him, in Dan. v. called Nebuchadnezzar's son, and Nebuchadnezzar his father, because it is the usual style of scripture to call any ancestor upward, father, and any descendant downward, son.—Prideaux's Connec-

> † Next to murder, no sin is so remarkably punished in this world as that of sacrilege. appears from innumerable instances taken from all histories, both sacred and profane. But in the heathen story, remarkable examples of this kind are, the miserable end of the Phoceans, who robbed the temple of Delphos, and were the occasion of that war which was called from thence the holy war: the destruction of the Gauls in their attempt upon the same temple, and of Crassus, who plundered the temple of Jerusalem, and that of the Syrian goddess; as these two last stories are related by Prideaux.

and after a long consultation, frankly declared they knew nothing of the matter.

Upon this the king, from his anxiety, caused a proclamation to be published all over his dominions, with promise of a golden chain, the privilege of a royal purple robe, and the third place of rule in his kingdom, to any man that should give him the interpretation of that writing.* In consequence of this proclamation, the wise men assembled, and exerted their utmost efforts to obtain the proffered reward, without the least degree of success.

While the king was under the greatest anxiety concerning this perplexing circumstance, the queen+ informed him for

* It appears, that the kings of Babylon wore the same ornaments, and, in rewarding their favourites, gave the same marks of honour, that the kings of Persia and their successors did. For purple, we find, in several Greek authors, was the ordinary habit of the kings of Persia, and of the princes of their court, that were in the highest posts of honour. The chain, or collar of gold, was one of the greatest marks of distinction that the Persian kings could bestow upon their subjects; and 'to be the third ruler of the kingdom' was the same sublime office that Darius the Mede put Daniel in, when he constituted him one of the presidents over the hundred and twenty princes,

that he had made governors over provinces.

† In the sacred history, we are informed that
the king, his princes, his wives, and his concubines
were all at the feast which he made for them; and yet it appears that the queen, upon hearing the news of the hand-writing, 'came into the ban-quet-house.' To elucidate this point it must be observed that this queen was not one of Belshaz-zar's wives, but Nitocris his mother, and she is called queen, or Iteghe, by way of eminence, because she had the regency of the kingdom under her son, for which her superior understanding duly qualified her. For this reason Herodotus speaks of her as if she had been sovereign of the kingdom, (in the same manner as Semiramis is said to have been,) and attributes to her all those works about Babylon, which other authors ascribe to her son. One instance of her ingenuity, for which she is celebrated, may be here noticed. She caused her tomb to be erected over one of the principal gates of the city, and so situated as to be obvious to universal inspection; it was thus inscribed:—"If any of the sovereigns, my successors, shall be in extreme want of money, let him open my tomb, and take what money he may think proper; if his necessity be not great, let him forbear, the experiment will perhaps be dan-

plaster. They laid their heads together, his comfort, that there was a certain Jew among the prisoners that Nebuchadnezzar had brought away with him upon the destruction of Jerusalem, who was deemed a man of great wisdom, and so wonderfully skilled in solving of difficulties and intricate questions, that he appeared to be under the direction of a divine spirit.

She also told him that Nebuchadnezzar made use of him for his interpreter in the like cases, when no one else was able to resolve him; wherefore she desired the king by all means to send for Daniel,‡ inquire of him about that writing, and give him encouragement to speak the truth, though it should portend something dreadful to himself.

Upon this advice Belshazzar caused Daniel to be sent for; professing indeed, that he had heard of the penetration and

offended at the gate being rendered useless, and that the invitation held out to become affluent should have been so long neglected. The gate, it is to be observed, was of no use, from the general aversion to pass through a place over which a dead body was laid. Darius opened the tomb; but, instead of finding riches, he saw only the dead body, with a label of this import: "If your avarice had not been equally base and insatiable, you would not have intruded on the repose of the dead." Such, observes the historian, is the tradi-

tion concerning this queen.—See Herodotus.

‡ Chardin informs us that when the king of Persia dies, his physicians and astrologers lose their places and are excluded from the court; the first, because they could not cure their sovereign, and the last, because they did not give previous notice of his death. This whimsical custom he supposes has descended to modern times from a very remote antiquity; and to have been the true reason that Daniel was absent when Belshazzar saw the hand writing his doom on the wall. If the conjecture of that intelligent traveller be well founded, the venerable prophet had been forced by the established etiquette of the court to retire from the management of public affairs at the death of Nebuchadnezzar; and had remained in a private station during the interval, neglected or forgotten, till the awful occurrence of that memorable night rendered his assistance necessary, and brought him again into public notice. This accounts in a very satisfactory manner, as well for the ignorance of that dissolute and thoughtless monarch, as for the recollection of Nitocris the queen-mother, who had long known his character and abilities during the reign of her husband. The thought is at least ingenious, and furnishes gerous." The tomb remained without injury till the best solution of a difficulty which otherwise the time and reign of Darius. He was equally is not easy to remove.—Paxton, Script. Illust. the best solution of a difficulty which otherwise

spirit of divination with which he was possessed; and that he took him to be the most likely person in the world to divine the truth of a matter which nobody else

could interpret.

Upon Daniel's being brought, the king put him the question, with an assurance that all the promises in his proclamation should be made good to him, upon his solution of it; which would make him famous all over the world, wherever it should be known that he had these honours done him for his wisdom.

Daniel excused himself from the receiving any gifts or honours.* "For wisdom," says he, "is a divine faculty, and not to be corrupted or profaned with bribes, but be ever ready to serve those that stand in need of it. This writing foretells that your death is at hand; for you should have taken warning by the judgments that befell your great ancestor, for his contempt of God, and have applied yourself to a religious course of life. You knew well," continued he, "that Nebuchadnezzar was banished the society of mankind, and condemned to the condition of a beast; but that afterwards it pleased God, upon his earnest prayers and repentance, to restore him to the conversation of men. and to the exercise of his former government, which through the infinite mercy and providence of God he adored and celebrated afterward all the days of his life. But for your part, you are so far from being wrought upon by this example in your family, that you blaspheme God to his face, and take a pride in profaning the vessels of his holy altar, in your de-

understanding of that man, and of the bauches with your harlots. By this lewd course of impiety, you have drawn the wrath of God upon your head; and the intent of this writing is only to show what you are to come to. Mene, which is as much as number, signifies, that the days both of your life and of your reign are numbered; and that you have but a short time to live. Tekel, or weight, gives you to understand, that your reign is weighed in the balance, and drawing to a conclusion. Peres, or a division, portends, that your kingdom shall be divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

> The king was most terribly mortified with this interpretation; yet notwithstanding he was so just and generous, as to make good to Daniel all that he had promised him, + though the foreteller of his

^{*} Here is a scripture and glorious instance of a spirit above bribery and corruption. Here was none of Baalam's spirit; in going to court and humouring and gratifying a prince's passion, or entering into his wicked counsels for gifts and promotion. Daniel served him disinterestedly, and in the course of his service, his eyes not being blinded with gifts, he faithfully, courageously, and honestly pointed out to him the faults he saw in his conduct, and what were the occasion of his approaching, as of his predecessor's misfortunes.

⁺ The text informs us, that 'They clothed him with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.'
This custom of changing the dress of a person, as a mark of honour, is still common in the East.
The words of the record, although not quite decisive, seem to favour the idea that the change of dress was a part of the ceremony by which Daniel was invested with official authority, and not a distinct honour. In Hindostan, no governor or other officer, can enter upon his office, without receiving a dress of honour from his sovereign. These dresses are conferred by a superior on a person of humbler condition, when he is raised to a place of power and trust, or as a mark of esteem and approbation. This custom, the Hindoos probably borrowed from the Persians; and if so, Daniel's change of dress was an established sign of his accession to the high dignity which he so well de-served. In ages long anterior to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Joseph was invested with the office of ruler over all the land of Egypt by a similar ceremony: 'Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.' The robes of office, with which Mordecai the Jew was arrayed in the court of Ahasuerus, were still more gorgeous, for he 'went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple.' From these quotations it appears, that the investiture consisted of various ceremonies; the appointment was no sooner announced than the monarch took the ring from his hand, and put it on the tinger of the minister, then he changed his dress, then put a gold chain about his neck, and last of all presented him with an equipage corresponding with his dignity, which completed

ruin; considering with himself, that it was | Daniel had acted the part of a just and a not the prophet's fault, but his own unhappy lot, that he could tell him no better tidings; neither could he deny but that

the investiture.—The caffetan, or robe of honour, is often bestowed as a mark of distinction, without any reference to office. La Roque, and three other attendants on the French consul at Sidon, received each a robe of honour at a public audience, from Ismael, the Turkish basha. In China the agents of foreign powers are sometimes invested, by order of the emperor, with dresses of honour. Mr Bruce also was favoured with this mark of distinction by Osman, one of the beys of Egypt, on his return from Abyssinia; which operated an immediate and important change to the better in the sentiments and conduct of the persons to whose care he was committed; the haughty Mussulmans no sooner beheld him retire from the presence chamber with this mark of their master's regard, than, laying aside the brutality in which they indulged before, they became civil, attentive, and even obsequious, to the stranger, whom they still secretly hated or despised. The kings of Persia bestow a dress of honour upon their favourites, particularly on occasion of their great festivals. Mr Lowth supposes, in his commentary on Daniel, that although the king thought himself bound to perform his promise to clothe the venerable seer with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and make him third ruler in the kingdom, yet it was likely it could not take effect at that unseasonable time of the night: and, therefore, the words might have been better translated: 'Then commanded Belshazzar that they should clothe Daniel with scarlet.' But this is an unnecessary refinement; for these caffetans are always in readiness, and are commonly put on as soon as the command is given. Mr Bruce received the caffetan in the middle of the night: and the following passage from Chardin will show how easy it is for an oriental prince to put a garment on the person he intends to honour. Having observed, that in Persia and the Indies, they not only give a vest-ment, but even a complete suit of clothes, when they would distinguish a person with more than ordinary honour, he proceeds: "These presents of vestments are only from superiors to inferiors; not from equals to equals, nor from the mean to the great. Kings constantly give them to ambassadors, residents, and envoys; and send them to princes who are their tributaries, and do them homage. They pay great attention to the quality, or merit of those to whom these vestments, or habits, are given; they are always answerable to their rank. Those that are given to their great men have, in like manner, as much difference as there is between the degrees of honour they possess in the state. The kings of Persia have great wardrobes, where there are always many hundreds of habits ready, designed for presents, and sorted. The intendant of the wardrobe sends one of them to the person, as the great master orders, and of that kind the order directs. In Turkey, they pay little attention to the difference of the cloth of which the vest-

good man, in letting him know the truth of things, though deplorable in the event.

Soon after the prophet's interpretation, both himself and the city fell into the power of Cyrus;* for Babylon was taken

same value, but they give more or fewer, according to the dignity of the person to whom they are presented, or the degree in which they wish to honour him. Some ambassadors have received twenty-five or thirty of them, for themselves and their attendants; and one person sometimes re-ceives a number for himself, according to his rank." But besides the caffetan, an Eastern prince sometimes gives his own garment as the highest token of respect; thus Selim gave his robe to the iman of the mosque at Aleppo, who happened to please him greatly; but the custom existed in those countries long before his time, for Jonathan, as a proof of his tender affection, and the strongest confirmation of his unalterable friendship, 'strip-ped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle.'-Paxton.

* The siege of this important place was no easy enterprise. The walls of it were of a prodigious height, and appeared to be inaccessible, without mentioning the immense number of people within them for their defence. Besides, the city was stored with all sorts of provisions for twenty years. However, these difficulties did not discourage Cyrus from pursuing his design: but, despairing to take the place by storm or assault, he made them believe his design was to reduce it by famine. To which end he caused a line of circumvallation to be drawn quite round the city, with a large and deep ditch; and that his troops might not be over-fatigued, he divided his army into twelve bodies, and assigned each of them its month for guarding the trenches. The besieged, thinking themselves out of all danger, by reason of their ramparts and magazines, insulted Cyrus from the top of their walls, and laughed at all his attempts, and all the trouble he gave himself, as so much unpro-fitable labour. As soon as Cyrus saw that the ditch was finished, he began to think seriously upon the execution of his vast design, which as yet he had communicated to none. He had invested the town to little purpose for the space of two years, when, understanding that the great annual festival was approaching, wherein the Babylonians, in honour of their idol Shishak, were accustomed to spend the whole night in revelling and debauchery, he thought this no improper time to attempt to surprise them. For this purpose he had posted one part of his men at the place where the river entered into the city, and another where it came out; and had commanded them to enter the city that very night, by marching along the channel of the river as soon as they found it fordable. Having given all necessary orders, and exhorted his officers to follow him, by representing to them that he marched ander the guidance of the gods, towards the evening ments are made; they make them nearly of the he caused the sluices or dams of the river above

Belshazzar, who is said to have been the last king of Nebuchadnezzar's family.

Darius was sixty-two years of age, when, with the assistance of Cyrus, his kinsman, he effected the subversion of the Babylonian empire.

This Cyrus, who was grandson of Astyages, took the prophet Daniel with him

the city to be opened. By this means the Eu-Then the two parties, according to almost dry. Then the two parties, according to their orders, entered the channel, the one commanded by Gobryas, and the other by Gadates, and advanced without meeting any obstacle. Finding, through the negligence and disorder of that riotous night, that the brazen gates which led down to the river, and which on all other nights were shut, were then left open, they ascended through them into the city; and both parties being met at the palace, according to their agreement, they surprised the guards and cut them to pieces. Some of the company in the palace hearing a noise, opened the gates to know what occasioned it, when the masters of it; where, finding the king, with his sword drawn, at the head of those who were at hand to assist him, they slew him, and put all those who attended him to the sword. Having entered the city in this manner, Cyrus commanded the citizens to bring him all their arms, and afterwards to shut themselves up in their houses. The next morning, by break of day, the garrison which kept the citadel being apprized that the city was taken, and their king killed, immediately surrendered themselves. The suddenness of the assault and capture of the city were so unexpected that no advantage was taken of the means of escape. One instance may be recorded. Nitocris had caused a large vault or gallery to be constructed under the river, leading across it from the old palace to the new, twelve feet high and fifteen wide; and having covered it over with a strong arch, and over that with a layer of bitumen six feet thick, she turned the river again over it;-for it is the nature of that bitumen to petrify when water comes over it, and grow as hard as stone, and thereby the water was prevented from pene-trating into the gallery. The use intended by this vault was to preserve a communication between the two palaces, whereof the one stood on one side of the river, and the other on the opposite side, that in case one of them were distressed, (for they were both fortresses strongly fortified,) it might be relieved from the other; or in case either were taken, there might be a way to retreat from it to the other. But all these precautions were unavailing when the city was taken; for in the alarm and confusion of that eventful night no use could be made of it. Babylon never recovered its ancient splendour after it was taken by Cyrus, but, upon the removal of the seat of empire from thence by the Persians, by degrees decayed till it was at last reduced to an utter solitude.

in the seventeenth year of the reign of into Media, and held him in great estimation; for he made him one of the three chief governors, that had one hundred and twenty more under them, according to the original constitution of Darius.

> Darius had so great a reverence for Daniel that he consulted him upon all occasions as an oracle, and would hardly resolve upon any matter of moment without his advice. But it fell out with Daniel as we find it in the case of other princes' favourites; the confidant that is most in credit never fails of drawing upon himself the envy of all the rest.

> Daniel was so well aware of these court stratagems, and kept so strict a guard upon himself, that there was no laying hold of any opportunity against him.

> As to bribes, he had a soul so much above any temptation of that kind, that he made conscience of receiving even a lawful acknowledgment for a good office. But this did not hinder his enemies from plotting his destruction, which they endeavoured to effect in the following man-

> Having observed that Daniel prayed to God constantly thrice a day, his adversaries studied how they should avail themselves of this pious practice to his ruin. They applied themselves to Darius, in the name of his council and state officers; and requested that he would be pleased so far to indulge his people as to pass an edict only for thirty days, that whosoever should presume to ask any thing of God or man, within that compass of time, should be cast into the lions' den.

> The king was so short-sighted as not to see through the malice of this contrivance; and that the very proposal struck at the life of Daniel: so that he assented to the motion, promised a confirmation of it, and ordered the publication of the decree, as an act passed by himself and his council.

> This decree, so severe and peremptory, greatly alarmed the people, who all desisted, even from the duties they owed their God. But Daniel, regardless of all

that man could do, continued the regular | the den, to know if he were living; to exercise of his devotion, and submitted the event to the pleasure and direction of an all-wise Providence.

This way of proceeding furnished his enemies with a pretence that they long waited for; therefore immediately they informed the king that Daniel was the only man who, in contempt of his royal proclamation, worshipped contrary to the tenor and direction of the decree, and that he did not do this out of piety, but from a spirit of contradiction and defiance to the authority of the edict.

The envy of Daniel's enemies was the more outrageous, upon the apprehension they had that the king's personal respect for him might incline him to pass over the affront; so they pressed him with clamours and outcries, not to be resisted, for justice upon the malefactor; nay, they insisted that he should be immediately thrown into the lions' den.

Darius was forced to yield to the violence of these importunities, but told Daniel for his comfort in this extremity, that rather than so good a man should perish, God would yet work some miracle for his relief. So Daniel was cast into the lions' den, and a great stone laid at the mouth of it, which the king sealed with his own signet,* and returned to his palace.

He passed that night fasting and waking, for his anxious concern for Daniel would not suffer him either to eat or sleep; but early in the morning he arose and went to the den, where he found every thing as he had left it, and the seal untouched.

He then called upon Daniel by his name, at a grate that looked down into

whom he made answer, that he was safe and well.

Then the king immediately ordered him to be taken out. But his inveterate enemies insisted on his continuance in the den. However, it was ordered by divine Providence that he received not the least hurt.

The king was so incensed at the malignity of those people, that he ordered as much meat to be given the lions as they could devour; and when they would eat no longer, to turn Daniel's accusers in among them,+ observing, that if they did not devour them, it would be because their bellies were full. But if they did, it must be allowed to be the immediate hand of God that preserved Daniel.

In fine, the lions tore them in pieces in an instant, and with as much eagerness as if they had been starved with hunger; or rather, as if the beasts themselves were become the ministers of God's justice upon those workers of iniquity.

Having thus made the enemies of Daniel a dreadful example to others, Darius published a decree through his whole empire, commanding his people to acknowledge the God of Daniel to be the only true and almighty God; and at the same time multiplied honours upon the prophet himself, in preference to all the rest of his friends and favourites.

Daniel, by this conduct, gained universal esteem, being a person highly in favour both with God and man. He is said to have erected at Ecbatan, the

^{*} Darius, in all probability, at the time of signing this decree, either forgot that he exposed his favourite, Daniel, to the machinations of his enemies, or was ignorant of his religious principles; for it is scarcely to be supposed he would have consented to any thing prejudicial to the interest of a man for whom he entertained so perfect a friendship and esteem.

⁺ The ancients were remarkably rigid in their punishments, and condemned the near relations of any criminal to death, from a notion that so extraordinary a degree of severity might restrain the commission of offences, since few would be ready to undertake any action that would expose their families to ruin, however regardless they might be of themselves. This cruel law had been abolished amongst the Jews in the time of Moses, who decreed that the punishment of transgressions should be entirely confined to the offender.

I This city, Herodotus says expressly, was built by Dejoces, the first king of the Medes: but that

capital of Media, a stately palace re- | There are other passages in the history markable for its beauty and magnificence, which was famous for being the royal mausoleum of the kings of Media and Persia.

author is wrong, in ascribing the honour of the whole work to him, which his son Phraortes, at least, finished and beautified to such a degree, that, though the scripture is silent, profane authors have given us a very advantageous account of it. The city, according to them, was situate on a spacious eminence, and into it Dejoces had brought together the whole nation of the Medes, who never before had lived in any thing but caves and huts, dispersed up and down in the country, which great concourse of people made it very large and populous. It was encompassed with seven walls, at an equal distance from each other. The first was the lowest, and equal in circumference with those of Athens, i. e. according to Thucydides, an hundred and seventy eight furlongs. The rest rose gradually, and overlooked each other, about the height of a battlement. The battlements were of different colours. The first was white; the second black; the third red; the fourth blue; the fifth of a deep red; the sixth of a silver, and the seventh of a gold colour; and for this reason, (as Bochart has observed) this city was usually called by the ancients, Agbata, which, in the Arabian language, signifies a thing of different and distinct colours. The royal palace and treasury stood within the seventh wall; and the palace alone (according to Polybius,) was seven furlongs round, and built with all the cost and skill that a stately edifice did require; for some of its beams are said to have been of silver, and the rest of cedar, which were strengthened with plates of gold. Calmet and Wells .- Hamadan now occupies the site of the celebrated ancient city, the localities of the one, as proved by a great number of authori-ties, exactly corresponding to those of the other. The plain of Hamadan is nine miles long by fifteen broad, and is one continued series of delightful gardens and orchards. The modern city lies on the declivity of Orontes now called Alwend, on its eastern side. Alwend abounds in rivulets of the finest water, a blessing of inestimable value in the arid and parched region of Persia. One of these runs constantly through the city into the plain, and renders it one of the best watered places in Persia. Its present habitations are pro-fusely interspersed with trees, which give variety and beauty to the scenery. On the skirts of Alwend, Morier was introduced into a most extensive garden, in the centre of which was an alley of poplar, willow, and narwend trees, nearly a mile long, and in which, besides the great crowd that followed him and his suite through curiosity, were many of the natives singing and taking their pleasure; among whom was a large group seated under the trees, around a basin of the coolest and most transparent water. The extensive plain it-self is varied at short distances with numberless castellated villages rising from amidst groves of the noblest trees, and seems one luxuriant carpet the Persian kings from the time of Cyrus, as a

of Daniel, which are yet more admirable and particular, and demand peculiar attention. He had this singular blessing attending him, beside his excellent gift of prophecy, that he lived in a high degree of reputation, both with king and people; and at his death left a character that reflects everlasting honour on his memory; for we find by his writing, God communed with him in a very express manner, and revealed to him not only the sum and substance of things to come, (as was usual to other prophets,) but the very time when such or such an event should come to pass. And whereas other prophets were more exercised in the forboding of calamities, and consequently drew upon themselves envy and ill-will, both from princes and people, Daniel conciliated the esteem of both, made friends of both, by the good things he told them, when they took delight to hear; and then as to the certainty of the event, all are agreed that he spoke from the dictate of an infallible spirit, as may be abundantly gathered also from the writings which this great prophet has left behind him.

To justify this observation we cite the particulars of a vision, as related by himself: "It fell out, as I was taking the air one day, with some of my companions at Susa,* the metropolis of Persia, that we

of the liveliest verdure, studded with hamlets, and watered with numberless rills. Hamadan, in short, to use Morier's own words, is one of the most delightful places in the East; and wears an air of prosperity, even amidst the ruin that, during the long continued struggles for imperial power that have desolated Persia, has overtaken its cities. It contains about 40,000 inhabitants, 600 families of which are Jews and as many Armenians. Such being its present state, we may rest assured, that every thing which wealth could procure, power command, and ingenuity combined with taste could devise, would be done, to aid and to heighten the natural beauties of such a site during the splendid era of Persian magnificence.

* Susa, or Shushan, was situated on the banks of the river Ulai, and seems to have had its name from the plenty of lilies growing about it. It is said to have been built by Memnon a little before the Trojan war. It was the winter residence of

were surprised all on a sudden with an ing my face then toward the west, I saw earthquake. My friends ran away in a fright, and left me alone, fallen prostrate on the ground, in consternation and amazement. While I was in that posture, somebody, methought, came, took hold on me, bade me rise, and take good notice of things; for I should see wonderful revolutions that would befall my countrymen several ages to come. Upon my arising, I saw a large ram, with two horns, and the one higher than the other. Turn-

high ridge of mountains sheltered it from the north-east wind: but the bright sun so scorched it in the summer, that the inhabitants were obliged to cover their houses with earth to about the depth of a yard. Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, exceedingly adorned this place. From hence he issued his decree for perfecting the rebuilding of the temple, in gratitude for which, the Jews called the eastern gate of their temple, the gate of Shushan, and had a kind of resemblance of it carved thereon. Here also he kept his splendid feast, Esth. i. vi. The treasures of the kings of Persia were generally kept there, and the royal palace was built with white marble, and its pillars were covered with gold and precious stones. When Alexander seized this city, he found in it 50,000 talents of gold, besides jewels, and golden and silver vessels, to an immense value.—The present Shouster, the capital of Shusistan, is generally believed to be the ancient Susa; but Mr Kinnier rather thinks the ruins about thirty-five miles west of Shouster are those of that ancient residence of royalty, "stretching not less, perhaps, than twelve miles from one extremity to the other. They occupy an immense space between the rivers Kerah and Abzal; and, like the ruins of Ctesi-phon, Babylon, and Kufa, consist of hillocks of earth and rubbish covered with broken pieces of brick and coloured tile. The largest is a mile in circumference, and nearly one hundred feet in height: another, not quite so high, is double the circuit. They are formed of clay and pieces of tile, with irregular layers of brick and mortar, five or six feet in thickness, to serve, as it should seem, as a kind of prop to the mass. Large blocks of marble, covered with hieroglyphics, are not unfrequently here discovered by the Arabs, when digging in search of hidden treasure; and at the foot of the most elevated of the pyramids (ruins) stands the tomb of Daniel, a small and apparently a modern building, erected on the spot where the relics of that prophet are believed to rest," Major Rennel coincides in the opinion that these ruins represent the ancient Susa; but Dr Vincent determines for Shouster. The site of Susa is now a gloomy wilderness, infested by lions, hyænas, and other beasts of prey, the dread of whom compelled Mr Monteith and Mr Kinneir to take shelter for the night within the walls that encompass what is called Daniel's tomb .- Brown and Calmet.

a goat that passed through the air, and encountering the ram, struck him down twice, and trampled him under his feet. And after this there arose a large horn out of the forehead of the goat; and when it was broken, there sprung up four more instead of it, pointing toward the four quarters of the heavens."

Daniel writes also, "That from one of them came forth a little horn, which growing up, should wage war with the nation of the Jews, and destroy Jerusalem itself, and suppress the ceremonies of the temple, and all sacrifices, for the space of twelve hundred and ninety six days."

This was the vision that, as David writes, he saw at Susa, which was first showed by a revelation from God, and then interpreted after this following man-

"By the ram was designed the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians; by the horns, the succeeding kings that should rule over those people, and the last of their kings, by the last horn, as transcending all the rest in wealth and power; by the goat was signified some king of Greece, that should twice totally defeat the Persians, and subdue that empire; by the great horn upon the forehead of the goat, was meant the first of their kings; and by the budding out of four horns more, pointing to the four winds, were to be understood the successors to those kings, and the partition of their dominions, after the death of the first, though strangers to the blood; but that, however, they should reign for several years, and in process of time, out of these should come a king that would make war upon the Jewish nation, and utterly extinguish the form of the commonwealth, pillage the temple, and prohibit any sacrifices or worship in it for three years."

Daniel wrote also about the Roman empire, and especially of the desolation they should make of the Israelites; all which he received by divine revelation, stand as a testimony upon record of the ancient date, as a person that in time to agreement betwixt the presage and the event.

The exact fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets is an irrefragable argument of the superintendence of a divine Providence over human affairs, and refutes that system which blindly as well as impiously inculcates, that the whole course of sublunary events is a mere huddle of contingency, without any primary effective cause. The distance of time also from the predictions in general to their completion plainly indicates that they could not be fabulous or casual, and demonstrates that they were truly delivered as inspired by the most intuitive knowledge and unerring wisdom.

CHAPTER V.

The restoration of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity.-Proclamation of Cyrus to rebuild the temple .- Cambyses retards the progress of that pious work .- Smerdis the Magian rules for the space of seven months, after which Darius is chosen king .- Permits the continuance of the building, and promotes the design against the opposition of the Samaritans.

In the first year of Cyrus, and the seventieth of the Babylonish captivity, it pleased God, in compassion to a wretched people, according to what he had foretold them by the prophet Jeremiah, before the destruction of Jerusalem; that is to say, that after seventy years' bondage under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, they should be restored to their own country, see the temple rebuilt, and return to their former state of eminence and grandeur.

This was accordingly effected; for God put it into the heart of Cyrus to send his circular letters over all Asia, to this effect, signing them, 'Cyrus the king:'-"I do fully persuade myself, that the great God, of whose gift and bounty I hold my empire, is the very God that the children of Israel adore; for I find honourable men-

and transmitted in writing to posterity, to tion made of my name by his prophets of come should rebuild Jerusalem, and reinstate the people."

> Cyrus, it seems, had seen and read the prophecies of Isaiah, which bore date a hundred and fifty years before he was born, wherein he gives an account of a revelation he had from God, "That he would raise up one Cyrus, to be a king of many, and of powerful nations, who should reestablish the Hebrews in their native country."

The king was so transported upon the reading of these divine predictions concerning himself, that he immediately applied himself to the bringing about their accomplishment. To promote this pious design, he called together all the leading men of the Jews to Babylon, where he told them that so many of them as were disposed to return into their own country, should have free passports, and permission to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem, if they thought fit, as he made no doubt but that God would bless them in the undertaking, promising over and above, that he would send his orders to all his officers and governors, bordering upon Judea, to furnish them with gold and silver, for the rebuilding of the temple, and beasts for sacrifices.*

^{*} It is a good deal more than probable, that this decree in favour of the Jews was in a great measure owing to Daniel's good offices. Cyrus, at his first coming into Babylon, after he had taken the city, found him there an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom over all the East, and in many things for a knowledge superior to the rest of mankind; and accordingly, we find, that he not only employed him as such, but, upon the settling of the government of the whole empire, made him first superintendent, or prime minister of state, over all the provinces of it. In this station of life, Daniel must have been a person of great authority at court, and highly in the esteem of his prince, and therefore, as we find him earnest in his prayer to God for the restoration of his people, Dan. ix. we cannot but think, that he would be equally warm in his intercessions for it with the king. To which purpose, it is not improbable, that he might show him those passages in Isaiah, which speak of him by name, (an hundred and fifty years before he was born,) as a great

The most eminent of the two tribes of | till the temple should be finished, and Judah and Benjamin, together with the priests and Levites, immediately upon this declaration, hastened away toward Jerusalem. But there were a great many, however, that chose rather to stay in Babylon, than to quit their possessions.*

Upon their arrival at Jerusalem, all the king's friends and officers contributed largely and unanimously toward the great work. Some gave gold, others silver, and some cattle; others attended the discharge of their vows, and the solemnity of oblations, as if they were already entered upon the business of re-erecting the city, and in the exercise of their ancient discipline.

Now Cyrus had sent them from Babylon the holy vessels and utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from the temple at Jerusalem, which were delivered to Mithredath, the king's treasurer, and by him to be deposited with Sheshbazzar+

prince, and conqueror, the ruler of many nations, and the restorer of his people, by causing his tem-ple to be built, and the city of Jerusalem re-inhabited. For, that Cyrus had seen those prophecies, the thing is plain, not only from the testimony of Josephus; but from the recital that is made of them in the decree itself, Ezra i. 2. and if so, who should be so proper to show them to him, and to recommend the accomplishment of them to his princely care, as Daniel, who had so great credit with him, and so passionate a concern for the restoration of Sion.—Prideaux's Connec-

* We do not find that Daniel took the advantage of the edict which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews; and therefore we may suppose, that as he did not return with them to Jerusalem, the king might require his continuance with him, and Daniel might the rather consent to it, as having Daniel might the rather consent to it, as having thereby a better opportunity to befriend his countrymen upon any exigence. To this purpose, it is highly probable that he attended the Persian court, which, after the taking and defacing of Babylon, resided in summer at Shushan, or Susa, and in winter, at Ecbatana. The common tradition is, that he died in the third or fourth year of Cyrus, and about the 91st year of his age: for even to this day (as we learn from Benjamin's Itinerarium) the inhabitants of the place (at present called Tuster) show his monument.

† In the time of the captivity, it was a common thing for the great men of Judah to have two names; one of their own country, which was domestic, and another of the Chaldeans, which was used at court. Zerubbabel was born in Babylon; then immediately to be put into the hands of the priests and magistrates for the use and service of the temple.

Cyrus, after this, wrote another letter to the governor of Syria, in the following manner:

"Cyrus the king, to Sysina and Sarabasan, greeting.—Be it known unto you, that I have given leave to all the Jews that are in my dominions, to return into their own country, and there to rebuild their capital city, with the holy temple at Jerusalem, in the same place where it stood before. I have likewise sent my treasurer, Mithredath, and Zorobabel, the governor of Judea, to superintend the building, and to see it raised; sixty cubits upwards from the ground, and as many over; the walls to be three rows of polished stone, and one of the wood of the country, together with an altar for the sacrifices; and all this to be done at my charge. I have also appointed my own treasurer Mithredath, and Zorobabel, the prince of Judea, to cause all utensils and vessels that Nebuchadnezzar carried away from the temple at Jerusalem, to be sent back, and restored. That is to say, fifty golden ewers, and four hundred silver ones. Fifty golden vessels, and four hundred silver ones. Fifty golden lavers, and five hundred silver ones. Thirty golden chalices, and three hundred silver ones. Thirty golden phials, and two thousand four hundred silver ones. Besides a thousand of other large vessels of different sorts. It is my further pleasure also, that they receive entire to themselves all the profits and revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their predecessors; and that they have an allowance paid them of two hundred and fifty thousand five

and his name, which signifies an exile, or stranger in Babylon, imports the misery of the people of Israel at that time; but Sheshbazzar, which is a compound of two words, signifying fine linen and gold, seems to be a name of a better omen, and to denote their future more flourishing condition. Patrick's Commentary.

be raised upon the tribute of Samaria. Moses; and to pray daily for the king and the royal family, and for the welfare and happiness of the Persian empire. Let no man presume to do any thing contrary to the tenor of this my royal will and proclamation, upon pain of forfeiting life and estate."

This was the substance of the king's letter. And the number of those that returned out of captivity to Jerusalem, upon this encouragement and invitation, was forty-two thousand four hundred and sixtytwo persons.

The Jews, upon their return from captivity, had no sooner entered upon the grateful, though arduous employ of rebuilding the temple, than the neighbouring nations, and especially the Cuthites, which Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, had formerly transplanted from Persia and Media into Samaria, after he had removed the Israelites into other habitations, applied themselves to the princes and governors, to whom the care of this enterprise was committed, pressing them with great importunity, not to suffer the Jews, upon any terms, to proceed upon the project of rebuilding the city and temple.

These commissioners were prevailed upon, by bribes and fair words, to slacken their diligence in the despatch and prosecution of their orders; and during the course of this delay, Cyrus was so taken up in war with the Massagetes, that he could not attend to the execution of the work. He died in the seventieth year of his age.*

hundred drachmas in consideration of Upon the death of Cyrus, Cambyses beasts for sacrifices, wine and oil; and two his son, whom the scripture calls Ahasuethousand five hundred measures of wheat, rus, (Ezra iv. 6.) succeeded to the empire. in lieu of the fine flour, -and all this to He had no sooner assumed the government than the Samaritans made an appli-The priests are to offer up the sacrifices cation to him, desiring him to put a stop according to the laws and ceremonies of to the building of the temple; and their application was not in vain. Indeed he did not revoke his father's decree, perhaps out of some remains of respect for his memory, but he in a great measure frustrated its intent, by the many discouragements under which he laid the Jews: so that the work, if not entirely stopped, went on very slowly during his reign. He was notable for nothing but violence, foolishness, and cruelty;+ and his fits of

> that he died of a wound which he received in his thigh; and others, that he was killed in a battle with the people of Samos. Herodotus, Justin, and Valerius Maximus relate, that, in his war against the Scythians, falling into an ambush which queen Thomyris had laid for him, he was taken prisoner, and, with insult enough, had his head cut off by her order; but Xenophon's account is, that he died peaceably in his bed, amidst his friends, and in his own country; as indeed there is little reason to think either that so wise a man as Cyrus should, in his advanced years, engage in so desperate an undertaking as this Scythian expedition is represented on all hands; or that, had he died in Scythia, his mangled body could have ever been got out of the hands of these barbarians to be buried at Pasargada in Persia, as most authors agree it was, and where his monument was to be seen in the time of Alexander the Great .- Calmet's Dictionary and Prideaux's Connection.

> + The following instances, among others, evince the cruelty of his disposition. He had a brother, the only son of Cyrus besides himself, and born of the same mother: his name, according to Xenophon, was Tanaoxares, but Herodotus calls him Smerdis, and Justin, Mergis. He accompanied Cambyses in his Egyptian expedition; but being the only person among all the Persians that could draw the how which had been because the draw the bow which had been brought from the king of Ethiopia, Cambyses from hence confeived such a jealousy against him, that he could bear him no longer in the army, but sent him back into Persia. And not long after, dreaming that a messenger had arrived to inform him that Smerdis sat on the throne, he conceived a suspicion that his brother aspired to the kingdom, and sent after him into Persia Prexaspes, one of his chief confi-dants, with orders to put him to death, which were accordingly executed. This murder was the cause of another still more criminal. Cambyses had with him in the camp his youngest sister, whose name was Meroe. Herodotus acquaints us

^{*} It is generally agreed by historians, that Cyrus was much about seventy years old when he died, but then they widely differ among themselves as to the manner of his death. Some say, that he was taken in an engagement, and hanged; others,

seven years and five months he came to an untimely end, which was occasioned by

after what a strange manner this sister became his wife. As the princess was exceedingly beautiful, Cambyses absolutely resolved to marry her. To that end he called together all the judges of the Persian nation, to whom belonged the interpreta-tion of their laws, to know of them whether there was any law that would allow a brother to marry a sister. The judges being unwilling on the one hand directly to authorize such an incestuous marriage, and on the other, fearing the king's violent temper should they contradict him, endeavoured to find out a salvo, and gave him this crafty answer: that they had no law which per-mitted a brother to marry his sister, but they had a law which allowed the king of Persia to do what he pleased. And this answer serving his purpose as well as a direct approbation, he solemnly married her, and hereby gave the first example of that incest which was afterwards practised by most of his successors, and by some of them carried so far as to marry their own daughters, how repugnant soever it be to modesty and good order. This principle is the state of the stat cess he carried with him in all his expeditions, and from her he gave the name of Meroe to an island in the Nile, between Egypt and Ethiopia, so far he advanced in his wild march against the Ethio-pians. The circumstance that gave occasion to his murdering this princess was as follows. One day Cambyses was diverting himself in seeing a combat between a young lion and a young dog; the lion having the better, another dog, brother to him that was engaged, came to his assistance, and helped him to master the lion. This incident highly delighted Cambyses, but drew tears from Meroe, who being obliged to tell her husband the reason of her weeping, confessed, that this combat made her call to mind the fate of her brother Smerdis, who had not the same good fortune as that little dog. There needed no more than this to excite the rage of this brutal prince, who immediately gave her, notwithstanding her being with child, such a blow with his foot on the belly, that she died of it. So abominable a marriage deserved no better an end. He caused also several of the principal of his followers to be buried alive, and daily sacrificed some or other of them to his wild fury. He had obliged Prexaspes, one of his principal officers and his chief confidant, to declare to him what his Persian subjects thought and said of him, "They admire, Sir," says Prexaspes, "a great many excellent qualities which they see in you, but they are somewhat mortified at your imyou, but they are somewhat mortified at your immoderate love of wine."—"I understand you," replied the king; "that is, they pretend that wine deprives me of my reason. You shall be judge of that immediately." Upon which he began to drink excessively, pouring it down in larger quantities than ever he had done at any time before. Then ordering Prexaspes's son, who was his chief cupbearer, to stand upright at the end of the room, with his left hand upon his head, he took his bow, and levelled it at him; and declaring that he

passion often hurried him into almost his sword falling from the scabbard, and downright madness. After a reign of wounding his thigh, when he was mounting his horse in a precipitate rage.

> Immediately previous to the death of Cambyses, the government was usurped by Smerdis the Magian.* He was placed

> aimed at his heart, let fly, and actually shot him in the heart. He then ordered his side to be opened, and showing Prexaspes the heart of his son, which the arrow had pierced, asked him in an exulting and scoffing manner, if he had not a steady hand? The wretched father, who ought not to have had either voice or life remaining after a stroke like this, was so mean-spirited as to reply, "Apollo himself could not have shot better." Seneca, who copied this story from Herodotus, after having shown his detestation of the barbarous cruelty of the prince, condemns still more the cowardly and monstrous flattery of the father .-

> * The manner in which Smerdis the Magian came to usurp the Persian throne, is thus related by most historians: Cambyses had a brother, the only son of Cyrus besides himself, and born of the same mother. His name, according to Xenophon, was Tanaoxares, but Herodotus calls him Smerdis and Justin, Margis. He accompanied him in his wars for some time; but, upon a pique of jealousy, the king sent him back into Persia, and there caused him to be murdered privately. The king, when he went upon the Egyptian expedition, had left the supreme government of his affairs in the. hands of Patizithes, one of the chief of the Magians, (for the king was addicted to that sect of religion,) who had a brother, that did very much resemble Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and was, for that reason perhaps, called by the same name. Patizithes, hearing of the young prince's death, and supposing that this, and some other extravagancies of Cambyses had made him odious to his subjects, placed this brother of his on the throne, pretending that he was the true Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and so sent heralds through the empire to proclaim him king. It was the custom of the Eastern princes, in those days, to live retired in their palaces, and there transact all their affairs by the intercourse of their eunuchs, without admitting any else, unless those of the highest confidence, to have access to them. This conduct the pretended Smerdis exactly observed: but Otanes, a Persian nobleman, having a daughter, (whose name was Phedyma) who had been one of Cambyses's wives, and was now kept by Smerdis in the same quality, and being desirous to know whether he was the real son of Cyrus or not, sent her instructions, that, the first night she lay with him, she should feel whether he had any ears, (because Cyrus, for some crime or other, had cut off this Magian's ears) and she acquainting her father that he had none, he immediately took six others of the Persian quality with him, (among whom Darius was one,) and entering the palace, slew both the usurper and his brother, who had been the contriver of the whole plot.—Prideaux's Connection.
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> It may not in this place be impertinent, to

Ezra calls him Artaxerxes, chap. iv. 7.

give a succinct account of the Magi or Magians, as selected from various writers on the subject. This sect originating in the East, and abominating all images, worshipped God only by fire. Their chief doctrine was, that there were two principles, one of which was the cause of all good, the other the cause of all evil. The former is represented by light, the other by darkness, and that from these two all things in the world were made. The good god they named Yazdan or Ormund; the evil god, Ahraman; the former is by the Greeks named Oromasdes, the latter Arimanius. Concerning these two gods, some held both of them to have been from eternity; others contended the good being only to be eternal, the other created: both agreed in this, that there will be a continual opposition between these two till the end of the world, when the good god shall overcome the evil god; and that afterwards each shall have his world to himself, the good god have all the good men with him, the evil god all wicked men. Of this system, Zoroaster was the first founder, whom Hyde and Prideaux make contemporary with Darius Hystaspes, but whose era, as appears from Moyle, the Greek writers of the age of Darius make many hundred years before their own time. After giving a concise but animated account of the theology of Zoroaster, Gibbon has this foolish remark; "Every mode of religion, to make a deep and lasting impression on the human mind, must exercise our obedience, by enjoining practices of devotion for which we can assign no reason; and must acquire our esteem by inculcating moral duties, analogous to the dictates of our own hearts." The religion of Zoroaster was abundantly provided with the former, and possessed a sufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty the faithful Persian was invested with a mysterious girdle, from which moment the most indifferent action of his life was sanctified by prayer, ejaculations, and genuflexions, the omission of which was a grievous sin. The moral duties, however, were required of the disciple of Zoroaster, who wished to escape the persecution of Arimanius, or, as Mr Gibbon writes it, Ahriman, and to live with Ormund, or Ormusd in a blissful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety. In the time of Theodosius the younger, the Christians enjoyed a full toleration in Persia; but Abdas indiscreetly pulling down a temple, in which the Persians worshipped fire, a persecution against the Christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited, and prosecuted with unpersions and the christians was excited as a christian was a christian was excited as a christian was a christian was a christi relenting cruelty. The Magi are still known in Persia under the name of Parsi or Parses; their superstition is contained in three books, named Zend, Pazend, and Vestna, said by themselves to be composed by Zerdascht, whom they confound with the patriarch Abraham. The oriental Chris-tians pretend, that the Magi who adored Jesus Christ, were disciples of Zoroaster, who predicted to them the coming of the Messiah, and the newstar which appeared at his birth. Upon this latter sub-

on the throne by his brother Patizithes, His reign was of short continuance, being who pretended that he was Smerdis the little more than five, or according to others, brother of Cambyses, The history of seven months. As soon as he was set upon the throne, the inhabitants of Samaria, in like manner addressed a memorial to him, the tenor of which is as follows:--

"This is to give you, great Sir, to understand, that the Jews who were carried away to Babylon, are now returned to their former seats, and into our country, where they are busy upon the rebuilding of a city that was most deservedly destroyed for seditious practices. They are setting up markets, and places of commerce; repairing the walls, and renewing the temple; and if they persist in these works, you may assure yourself that they will never submit to serve, if they once get it into their power to command. We account it our duty, Sir, in this heat and zeal for the rebuilding of the temple, to lay before you the true state of the case, before it is too late. Review the history of your predecessors, and you shall there find the Jews from generation to generation, to be the enemies of all crowned heads: and that this very city was justly laid waste and desolate, for the crime of rebellion, And we are further to lay before you, that it appears to us, from divers concurring circumstances, that if they are permitted to carry their present designs into execution, you will find your communication cut off with Phoenice and Coelo-syria."

Artaxerxes, by nature turbulent and impetuous, was incensed beyond degree at these representations; and therefore returned the states the following answer:

"King Artaxerxes to Rathumus, his

ject, a modern writer has ingeniously remarked, that the presents which the Magi made to Christ, indicated their esteeming him a royal child, notwithstanding his mean situation and appearance: they gave him gold, frankincense, and myrrh, such as the queen of Sheba presented to Solomon in his glory. It seems almost unnecessary to add, that from these Magi or Magians the English word magic is derived:—See Prideaux, Gibbon, Bayle, Bibliotheque Orientale, and Harmer's Observations .- Beloe.

historiographer; Beeltethmus and Semellius the scribes, and other inhabitants of Samaria and Phœnice, greeting.-Upon the reading of your letter of address, I have caused a diligent search to be made into the history of former times, according to your request, and I find your remarks upon the city of Jerusalem to be true, and that the Jews have ever been a rebellious and anti-monarchical sort of people; turbulent and restless, and naturally addicted to innovations. I find likewise, that their kings have ever been fierce and violent, and extortionate in their taxes and impositions, to the highest degree of oppression, as Phœnice and Cœlosyria may witness against them. Wherefore I do command you to oppose them with all your might, in the rebuilding of the city; for as they grow in power they will certainly increase in malice and behave themselves as seditiously to the present governors, as they have done in times past to former kings."

Rathumus and Semellius, the king's scribes, had no sooner read this mandate than they set out, with many others, for Jerusalem; whither having arrived with the utmost expedition, they put an absolute stop, both to the rebuilding the city and the temple; so that it was retarded from that period to the second year of Darius Hystaspes.*

The Magian being cut off, the government was afterwards translated by the seven satrapæ, or eminent families of the Persians, and by common consent conferred on Darius, the son of Hystaspes.+

Darius, before he arrived at the regal dignity, made a solemn vow to the Lord, that if ever he came to the throne, he would send all the holy vessels that were at Babylon to the temple of Jerusalem; and it happened about that time that Zerubbabel, who was declared the prince or captain of the Jewish captives, came from Jerusalem to Darius.

Zerubbabel was admitted into the king's peculiar favour and confidence, and, together with two other great officers, vested with the highest offices of state.

Darius, in the first year of his reign, gave a splendid and magnificent entertainment, not only to his own courtiers, but to the princes and nobility of the Medes and Persians, the general officers of all India and Ethiopia, and the commanders of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces.

Upon the breaking up of the company,

was in the sixth year of Darius Nothus, will make them at least an hundred and fourscore years old, a thing almost incredible. And therefore the most probable opinion is, that the Darius here meant was Darius Hystaspes, whose second year was the eighteenth after the first of Cyrus, as Huetius reckous.—Patrick's Commentary.

† The seven princes, who had slain the usurper Smerdis, (Artaxerxes,) and his brother, consulting

The seven princes, who had slain the usurper Smerdis, (Artaxerxes,) and his brother, consulting together about the settling of government, came at length to this resolution, that the monarchy should continue in the same manner that it had been established by Cyrus; and that, to determine which of them should ascend the throne, they should all meet at a certain place the next morning, against the rising of the sun, and that he whose horse first neighed should be appointed king. For as the sun was the great deity of all the Persians, they seemed by this method to refer their election to it: but Darius's groom, being informed of this, tied a mare, on the night before the election, to the place where, the next morning, they were to meet, and brought his master's horse to cover her. As soon therefore, as the princes met together at the time appointed, Darius's horse remembered the place, ran immediately thither, neighing and prancing all along; whereupon the rest dismounting, saluted him as their king, and accordingly placed him on the throne.—Prideaux's Connection.

^{*} There are some who take the Darius here mentioned, not to be Darius the II. who was the son of Hystaspes, but the Darius who is commonly called Nothus; but then they are pressed with this difficulty, which may well be called insurmountable. For, from the first year of Cyrus, who gave orders for the building of the temple, to the sixth year of Darius Nothus, in which they suppose that it was finished, there were, at least, an hundred and thirteen years; according to some, an hundred and seventeen; and, according to others, an hundred and forty-two. But now, if all this time Zerubbabel was in the government of Judea, and Joshua in the high-priesthood, so long an authority in church or state was never heard of in any age before. Nor must it be forgotten, what the prophet Haggai, ch. ii. 3., supposes, viz. that some, then alive, remembered the glory of the first temple, and compared it with the glory of the second, which, upon the supposition that this

retired, every man to his own quarter. And Darius, in the mean while, finding, after a short slumber, that he could not compose himself, fell into discourse on different topics with his three favourite officers, telling them in the end, "That he had some questions to ask them; and for their encouragement, he that should give him the most reasonable and satisfactory answer should have the honour to be clothed in purple, drink in a golden cup, sleep upon gold, ride in a chariot with harness of gold, wear a silk tiara,* and a golden chain; have the next place to himself in council, and be accounted as one of the royal blood."

After this, he put his questions to them in order. To the first, if there was any thing stronger than wine? To the second, the same question again, of the strength of kings? And to the third, what he thought of the strength of women? Or, finally, of truth, perhaps, above all the rest?

Upon the putting of these queries to them, he left his officers to consider of the matter.

Early in the morning he called together all the princes of the Medes and Persians, with the chief officers and governors, placed himself upon the seat of justice, and caused the guards of his body to be sent for immediately, to give their opinions severally and publicly upon what he had proposed.

The first began upon the subject of the strength of wine; thus addressing the assembly:-"I take upon me to pronounce wine superior to all other powers whatsoever. For it overthrows the minds and understandings of all those that drink too plentifully of it. It puts the greatest prince into the condition of a child. sets the slave at liberty, even to the forgetting of his chains; and makes the beggar as rich and as great as an emperor.

when the entertainment was over, they | It changes and elevates the spirits, wherever it takes possession. It enlivens the heavy hearts of the miserable; pays all debts; and relieves men in all manner of necessities. It makes the mean, pusillanimous wretch, affect the air of the brave and noble, without respect to things or persons. It makes men forget their most intimate familiars and friends, and ungratefully treat their nearest relations, as if they were the most hateful strangers; and then when a person has recovered from a debauch, he remembers not what he did in the heat of liquor. For which reason I cannot but look upon wine as strongest in its effect."

> When the first had finished his discussion of the power of wine; the second stood up for the power of kings, in preference to all other, which he endeavoured to prove after this manner: "It is beyond dispute, that God has made man master of all things under the sun, so far as to command them to make use of them, and apply them to necessary purposes of life; but whereas men have only a dominion over other sublunary creatures, kings have an authority even over men themselves, and a right of ruling them, superior to those that are masters of all things else, hath a just title to precedence, and to be accounted supreme, having no earthly thing above him. When princes find it convenient to expose the persons of their subjects to wars and dangers, they obey them without any reluctance, let the hazard be what it will; whether bodies to bodies, or in the attack of walls or works, forcing of passes, or, as it often happens, in contending with nature itself. We see how frankly they offer themselves either to kill or be killed, in the execution of their princely orders; and then in case of a victory at last, the honour and profit of the whole redounds to the king. much for the military part; and the same reason holds good in the common business of life, whether the countryman ploughs, sows, digs and sweats, to supply the king's

^{*} This was a rich ornament for the head, worn by emperors, kings, and great personages among the Eastern people in former times.

stores out of his toil and labour, or whatsoever he commands, it must be obeyed, without expostulation or delay. king, while the people are thus labouring for him, takes his fill of every delicate pleasure, sleeps in security, with his guards about him, under an indispensable obligation of the closest and most watchful attendance; nor dares a man amongst them close his eyes while his master is at rest; for the king's business is theirs, without any sort of liberty to attend to any other; so that nothing certainly can be stronger than the force of that power which the whole multitude obeys to all intents and purposes."

After this declamation upon the power of kings, Zerubbabel stood up in vindication of women and truth, and thus enforced his argument: "The power of wine is not to be denied, neither is that of kings, that ties up so many millions of men in one common bond of allegiance; but the supereminence of women, notwithstanding, exceeds all this; for the mother of the king was before the king himself, and kings are but the gifts of the women, who brought them into the world; and women were likewise the mothers and nurses of those that cultivate our vineyards, and dress our vines. There is not any thing we can pretend to, but what we either directly or indirectly receive from them. They have a hand in the government of our domestic affairs; nay, in the dress and ornament of our bodies; and, in fine, God hath made them so necessary to us, that we cannot live without them. The sight of a beautiful woman constrains a man to sacrifice his property, and his most darling attachments to the possession of her charms. Women have the power to make us abandon our very country and relations, and frequently to forget the best friends we have in the world; and forsake every other comfort, to live and die with them.

"I may further add, that when we have compassed sea and land, for every thing

that is rich and curious in nature, do not we resign all to the disposal of some woman, who reigns sole mistress of our hearts? How have I seen a king, in the very meridian of his glory, submit to the highest indignity from the hand of his concubine? Nor was this all. She would take the crown from the king's head, and set it upon her own; and he, weak man, was so infatuated with her beauty, as to condescend to any foolery, in order to please her; or suffer himself to be treated just as her caprice might direct."

The princes and nobility were not a little amazed at the freedom used by Zerubbabel in vindication of his argument; however, he proceeded to the discussion of the last point, which was the article of "I have delivered my opinion upon the subject of women. But after all, neither they nor kings are comparable to the irresistible force of truth. For allowing the vast magnitude of the earth, the height of the heavens, and the unspeakable swiftness of the sun, and that all this is ordered by a divine hand, it must be granted withal, that God is just and true; and consequently that truth is of all things imaginable the most powerful, since neither error nor injustice can prevail against it. As for every thing else that passes for great in the world, they are mortal and short-lived, but truth alone is unchangeable and everlasting; the benefits we receive from it are subject to no variations or vicissitudes of time and fortune, but righteous and warrantable, and without any stain of iniquity or reproach."

Zerubbabel had the universal acclamation of the audience, for the excellent things he delivered; and they all agreed with him, that truth was incorruptible, and the only blessing under the sun that was not liable to alteration and decay; so that the king, as an instance of his full satisfaction in this answer to the question, bade him take his choice out of what he

had promised him, and he would freely to restore all those lands to the Jews that grant it him.

For, says he, addressing himself to Zerubbabel, "You shall have the preference in my esteem above all other men, in consideration of the superiority of your wisdom and understanding above that of your companions. And from this time forward you shall have the first place of honour next to my own person, and stand adopted into the royal family."

Zerubbabel embraced this opportunity to remind the king of a former vow he had made; which was, that if he ever came to the crown, he would immediately apply himself to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the holy temple there, and order a restitution to be made of all the sacred vessels and utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from thence, and carried to Babylon.

"Now," says he, "since your majesty has done me the honour of reputing me a wise man, and given me the preference on this occasion, my humble request is, that you will now discharge your vow, and fulfil your promise."

The king, upon this challenge, raised himself from his throne, embraced his adviser, and despatched mandates to his governors and great officers to conduct Zerubbabel, and those to go along with him, to their journey's end, and to assist him in the rebuilding of the temple.

He wrote letters also to the magistrates of Phœnice and Syria, to provide carriages for the transporting of the cedar to Jerusalem, that was cut down in Lebanon, and to afford them all possible assistance in their undertaking.

The king likewise gave charge to exempt all the Jews that should now return out of this captivity, from the burden of any public tax or duty, and to leave them at liberty in their persons, as well as in their estates, without either restraint or tribute.

Also he commanded the Edomites, Samaritans, and the people of Cœlo-syria, to restore all those lands to the Jews that had been formerly in their possession, and to contribute fifty talents over and above, toward the erecting of the temple; and assigned them out of his own bounty whatever should be found necessary, either in sacerdotal habits or otherwise, for the due regulation of every part and branch of that important work.

He moreover assigned them organs also to accompany the voices of the Levites, and ordered a certain proportion of land for the entertainment of the officers and keepers both of the city and the temple, by way of an annual pension; confirming every thing, in fine, that Cyrus had formerly resolved upon respecting the restoration of the Jews, and their holy vessels.

Zerubbabel having thus obtained the summit of his wishes at the hand of king Darius, he no sooner had left his presence, than he addressed the throne of divine grace, to return God unfeigned thanks for the honour he had received from the king, in the reputation of his wisdom, beyond the rest of his competitors, which he acknowledged to be only the distinguishing effect of his goodness; concluding his thanksgiving with a prayer for the success of his undertaking; and then went his way to his countrymen at Babylon, with the joyful news of their deliverance.

Upon these tidings they joined immediately in a universal thanksgiving for the promise of this restoration to their native country. And after the solemnity was over, they devoted seven successive days to feasting, and indicated such tokens of general joy, that the day of their redemption and return seemed as the first day of a new life to them.

The heads of the tribes made choice of those that were to go upon this expedition, providing horses, and other beasts of burden, and carriages for their wives and children, and taking those troops along with them which Darius had appointed for a convoy.

In this manner they passed their time cheerfully upon the way, with pipes and cymbals playing before them, and the whole multitude dancing and rejoicing after the music.

There was a select number chosen out from every tribe; but as the mentioning them singly would rather tire than instruct the reader, we shall only mention the distinct tribes.

There were of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.

After these came four thousand and seventy Levites; and a promiscuous multitude of women and children, to the number of forty thousand seven hundred and forty-two.

Of the stock of the Levites there were an hundred and twenty-eight singers; a hundred and ten porters. And of others that served and assisted in the sanctuary three hundred and twenty-two.

There were also six hundred and fifty two, that called themselves Israelites, but could not prove their extraction.

There were others that had taken wives, whose genealogy could not be made out, either from the Levites or sacerdotal records; and these were accounted unqualified for the holy function, to the number of five hundred and twenty-five.

The train of servants that attended them was reckoned at seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; single men and women, two hundred and thirty-five; camels, four hundred and thirty-five; and other beasts of carriage, five hundred and twenty-five.

The leader of this multitude was Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, of the tribe of Judah, and the race of David; and with him Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and Mardochæus, and Serebæus, which two were chosen to the command by the suffrage of the tribes, and contributed, at their own charge, a hundred pounds of gold, and five thousand pounds of silver, towards the expense of this expedition.

This was the order and manner of the march of the priests and Levites, and that part of the people that went along with them in their return from Babylon to Jerusalem, the rest following after by degrees, till in the end they all went back to their own habitations.

In the seventh month after their departure from Babylon, Jeshua the highpriest, and Zerubbabel their prince, sent messengers throughout the land, to summon the people to a general meeting at Jerusalem, in consequence of which they gathered together with great cheerfulness.

Upon this meeting there was erected an altar to sacrifice upon, according to the appointment of God by his servant Moses, and it was raised upon the same place where it stood before. This proceeding gave great offence to the neighbouring nations, who had a mortal aversion both to the people and to whatever they did. It fell out just upon the feast of tabernacles, according to the Mosaical institution; after that came the daily oblations, and the sacrifice of the sabbaths, and of the new moons, and of all holy feasts; all those that had made any vow came likewise to perform it, from the first day of the seventh month.

They entered then upon the building of the temple, and expended vast sums of money upon workmen and builders of all sorts; and upon provisions for those that assisted in the carriage of materials. The Sidonians contributed liberally towards this work, bringing down cedar-trees in abundance from Lebanon, and framing them into boats, which they brought into the port of Joppa, as they had been ordered, first by Cyrus, and after him by Darius.

It was now the second month of the second year after the return of the Jews, when the foundations of the temple being already laid, they began on the first day of December with the superstructure, committing the care of the building to the whole family of the Levites, of twenty years of age and upward, and likewise to Jeshua, with his sons and brothers; and to Kadmiel, the brother of Judah, and the son of Aminadab, and to his sons, who were all so diligent and industrious in the discharge of their commissions, that the fabric went forward beyond expectation.

When they were advanced thus far, the priests came and officiated in their habits, with musical instruments; and the Levites, and the sons of Asaph, sung some of the hymns of David to the honour of God, according to the first institution. But the priests and Levites, and the elders of their families who had seen the glory and magnificence of the former house, observing how inferior this was when compared with the other, broke out into tears and lamentations.*

The common people, however, that had never seen the former, and consequently could not be troubled at the disproportion, contented themselves with the present state of things, though the passion of the

The old men, who had seen the glory of the first temple, and had no expectation that this, which was now building by a few poor exiles lately returned into their country, could ever equal the former, which had all the riches of David and Solomon, two of the wealthiest princes of the East, expended in its erection, wept at the remembrance of that which was gone, while others rejoiced at the foundation of the new one. Indeed the dif-ference between the former temple, and this which was now beginning was so great, that God himself tells the prophet Haggai, (chap. ii. 3.) that the latter was as nothing in comparison with the former. It is true that the dimensions of the two temples were the same; but in its ornaments, materials, and workmanship, Solomon's temple was far superior to the second temple; and, what was more important, the second temple entirely wanted that which constituted the main glory of Solomon's temple, the extraordinary marks of the divine favour; consisting especially in the holy ark of the covenant, and the mercy seat which was upon it, in the Shechinah or symbol of the divine presence, in the Urim and Thummim, and in the holy fire on the altar: but all these wants and defects were afterwards abundantly supplied in the second temple, when the Desire of all nations came to this temple, when Christ our Savour, who was the most true Shechinah of the divine majesty, honoured it with his presence; in this respect the glory of the lat-ter house did far exceed the glory of the former; and the prophecies of Haggai, who foretold that it should be so, had a full completion. - Dean Prideaux.

years of age and upward, and likewise to Jeshua, with his sons and brothers; and time, that their very sighs and cries were to Kadmiel, the brother of Judah, and the almost as loud as the music.

The report of this noise of trumpets, with a confused clamour and mixture of joy and sorrow, being brought to the Samaritans, they hastened in great multitudes to learn the cause of it; and finding that it was occasioned by the return of the Jews from the captivity at Babylon, and that they were now at work upon the rebuilding of their temple, they went immediately to Zerubbabel and Jeshua, with the chief of the tribes, and desired that they themselves might likewise be admitted to assist in the undertaking, upon terms in common with the rest. For,"

+ The Jews steadily rejected the proposal made by the Samaritans, to join with them in rebuild-ing the temple of the God of Israel, and celebrating his worship; and we can discern important reasons, in consequence of which this rejection appears to have been subservient to the purposes of the divine economy. The intermixture of the Samaritans with the Jews, might have rendered the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning the family and birth of the Messiah less clear; might have introduced again idolatry among the restored Jews, now completely abhorrent from it, and in various ways defeated the grand objects of Providence in selecting and preserving a peculiar people. In consequence of this rejection, and the alienation it produced, the Jews probably became more vigilant in preserving the strictness, and the Samaritans more zealous in emulating the purity of the Mosaic ritual. They became hostile and therefore unsupected guardians and vouchers of the integrity of the sacred text, particularly of the Pentateuch. And while the Jews, in general blinded by their national prejudices, could see in the promised Messiah only a national and temporal deligrams. al deliverer; the Samaritans appear to have judged of his pretensions with more justice and success. And though our Lord visited them only as it were incidentally, yet he was able to declare to them his character, and avow his dignity, without that mysterious reserve and jealous caution which the proneness of the Jewish multitude "to take him by force and make him a king" constantly required. And it seems evident, that the Samaritans were predisposed and prepared to receive and diffuse the light of the gospel more than any other description of men, the pious and reflecting part of the Jewish nation only excepted. And thus this circumstance, in the progress of the Jewish dispensation, which at first view might seem to prove it was peculiarly partial or confined, appears in its final result to have materially facilitated the diffusion of true religion in the world, and thus to have been subservient to the general advantage of mankind .- Dr Graves.

value ourselves upon the glory of the same profession, and upon the love and practice of the same religion, from the very days of Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, who transported us out of Media into this land."

The answer to the request was, with one voice, that they could not take them into a partnership in the building, because formerly Cyrus, and after him Darius, had assigned the building of it to their particular care; but that they should have liberty, if they thought fit, to worship there, without exception to any man, and that it should be open to all people indifferently, who were disposed to serve God in it.

The Cuthites (for so were the Samaritans called) were so offended at this refusal, that they stirred up the Syrians to apply themselves to the great men as they did at first, under Cyrus, and afterward under Artaxerxes, that a stop might be put to the progress of the building, by abating the diligence of those that were intrusted with the despatch of the work.

There went up to Jerusalem at this time, Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phœnice, and Sathrabuzanes with some others, and demanded of some of the principal men by what authority this temple was to be built, as it resembled a castle rather than a temple, and to what end the walls of the city were made so thick and strong, and the gates so fortified? Zerubbabel and Jeshua made answer, that they were the servants of the most high God, to whose honour this temple was built, and to his service it was dedicated by the greatest, and happiest, and the wisest prince that ever sat upon that throne, and that it had stood for many ages, till in the end, for the wickedness of their forefathers, the city, by God's permission, was taken, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and Chaldea, the temple pillaged and laid in ashes, and the people carried away captive into Babylon; but that when Cyrus came to the government of

said they, "we worship the same God, Persia and Babylon, he ordered by his royal proclamation the rebuilding of the temple, and restoring of all the donations and vessels that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar, which were delivered to Zerubbabel, and his treasurer, to be transported to Jerusalem, and deposited there again in the temple; that by the command of the same king, Sisinnes was sent to that city to attempt the speedy execution of the work; that upon receipt of the king's letters, he came in all haste, and immediately laid the foundation; and that from that time forward their enemies had been still endeavouring by all the means their malice could suggest to impede and obstruct the prosecution of their designs. As by an application to Darius, they might have been assured of the truth of what they told them; and as they did not think it expedient to interrupt their progress without the knowledge of the king, they therefore agreed among themselves to write to him immediately about this matter. The Jews were not a little solicitous and apprehensive, lest the king, upon this application, should countermand the orders he had given, till Haggai and Zechariah,* two

^{*} Zechariah was the son of Barachiah, and grandson of Iddo, but the time and place of his birth are unknown. Some will have him to be born at Babylon, during the captivity; but others think that he was born at Jerusalem, before the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were carried away. It is certain, however, that he returned from Ba-bylon with Zerubbabel, and very probable, that he began to prophesy in the second year of Darius, the son of Hystaspes. The number, excellency, and preciseness of his prophecies, made him be styled the sun among the lesser prophets, and, as he began his predictions about two months after Haggai, with him he encouraged the Jews in rebuild-ing of their temple, and gave them assurance of the divine protection. But these prophecies were inconsiderable in comparison of those which foretell the Messias in the plainest terms; the cruel war which Antiochus Epiphanes waged with the Jews, and God's severe judgments against this tyrant, the Jewish war with the Romans, and the siege of Babylon by Darius; the dissolution of the old covenant, and the substitution of a new one under Christ; the glorious state of the Christian church, and the conversion of the Gentiles; the persecutions which the Christians should endure, and the severe punishment of their persecutors; and other

be of good cheer, and fear nothing from the Persians, for they were certainly informed of God's holy will and pleasure touching that affair. The people so absolutely depended upon this encouragement, that they laboured more incessantly, without the intermission so much as of one single day.

When the Samaritans had laid an accusation against the Jews before Darius, objecting against them the fortifying of the city, and the erecting of a strong place that looked more like a citadel than a temple, setting forth that this was not at all for the king's service, and showing also the epistle of Artaxerxes, by which he had forbidden and hindered it before, as a practice that was neither profitable nor safe for the public; when they had represented all this, and the king had received and considered of these letters, he ordered the royal memorials to be consulted upon this subject; and upon the search there was found at Ecbatana a certain book, wherein was written to this effect:

"It was ordained by king Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, that the temple of God should be rebuilt at Jerusalem,

such like events, contained in the ninth, and following chapter of his prophecies .- Contemporary with him was the prophet Haggai, who, in all probability, was born at Babylon, and returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. They both, with united zeal, encouraged the people to go on with the work of the temple, which, by the envy of the Samaritans, who were their enemies, and the ill offices of some at the court of Cyrus and Cambyses, whom they influenced, was discontinued for some time; but, upon the accession of Darius to the throne, Haggai, in particular, by reproaching the people with their indolence and insensibility, by telling them that they were careful enough to lodge themselves very commodiously, while the house of the Lord lay buried in its own ruins, and by putting them in mind, that the calamities of drought and famine, wherewith God had afflicted them since their return, were owing to their neglect in repairing the temple, prevailed with them to set about the work in good earnest; so that, by virtue of these reproofs, as well as some encouragements which God occasionally authorized him to give them, they brought the whole to a conclusion in a short time, - Calmet's Dictionary, and Universal History.

prophets among them atthat time, bade them | sixty cubits in height, and as many in breadth, and the altar in it; that there should be in the walls three rows of polished marble, and one of wood, of the growth of the country, and the charge of it to be defrayed out of the king's treasury; that the holy vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, should be carried back to Jerusalem, and restored; that the superintendence of this work should be committed to Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phœnice, and to his companions, with orders not to appear at Jerusalem themselves, but to leave the building of the temple to the Jews, the servants of God, and to the chief of their tribes; but to supply them, however, out of the taxes upon the province, and to furnish them for their sacrifices, with bulls, rams, &c. and whatever else the priests should desire, who were to pray to God for the welfare and happiness of the king of Persia, and of his people, and that whosoever should presume to act contrary to this mandate, should be forthwith taken and hanged up, and his goods confiscated, with the addition of a curse over and above, that whoever should dare to oppose or forbid the progress of this work, God would strike him with a vengeance as a judgment upon him for his iniquity."

When Darius, upon a search into the transactions of Cyrus, had informed himself upon the matter of fact in question, he wrote back to Sisinnes and his colleagues to this effect:

"King Darius to Sisinnes, the master of his horse; and to Sathrabuzanes, and the other magistrates with him, greeting:-I send you a copy of Cyrus's letter, transcribed out of his records, and it is my will and pleasure that all things may be done according to the direction of that appointment. Fare you well."

This letter gave them to understand how the king stood disposed; so that Sisinnes, and the rest, agreed among themselves to comply in all respects with the king's orders and command; and undertaking the care of the fabric, they assisted the Jews and their magistrates, and carried on the work so unanimously, that the building was erected according to the command of Cyrus and Darius, and finished within the compass of seven years; the prophets Haggai and Zechariah in the

mean time prophesying.

In the sixth year of Darius, and three and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which the Jews called Adar, the Macedonians, the priests and Levites, with the people of Israel, offered in sacrifice a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and twelve goats, as sin-offerings, for the twelve tribes,* in acknowledgment of the blessing of their deliverance from captivity, into their former state, and to his holy worship in the new temple.

The priests and Levites had their porters at every gate, according to the law, the Jews having built galleries round

about the temple.

The feast of unleavened bread was now drawing on, and in the first month which the Macedonians called Xanthicus, and the Jews Nisan, the people flocked from all places to the city, where they celebrated that festival, together with their wives and children, after the practice of their forefathers, with all the solemnity usual on the occasion.

Upon the fourteenth day of the first month, they had the passover, and kept together rejoicing for seven days after; offering up sacrifices and thanksgiving to God, for restoring them to the possession and enjoyment of their native country, their ancient laws and religion, and for disposing the heart and inclination of the king so favourably toward them.

They spared no cost in the celebration of this festival, and so replanted themselves in Jerusalem, where they erected an aristocracy; for the sovereign power was lodged in the high-priest till the Asmonean family, upon a turn of affairs, entered upon the government, and turned it into a monarchy.

Before the captivity, and for the space of five hundred thirty-two years, six months, and ten days, from the time of Saul and David, they were governed by kings; as they were likewise before, though under the name of judges, and that form of government continued upwards of five hundred years, after the administration of Moses and Joshua. This was the state of the Jews at the time of the restoration under Cyrus and Darius. But the Samaritans, who were an envious people, put them to much trouble; for they were powerful and wealthy, and claiming kindred with the Persians, valued themselves upon the credit of their original. They murmured at the taxes that were laid upon them by way of contribution to the sacrifices, made an interest to the superintendent of the works; and, in short, either by themselves, or others, improved all opportunities of annoying the Jews. This disorder prevailed so far, that the senate and the people of Jerusalem, drew up a complaint against the Samaritans, and sent Zerubbabel with four more of his colleagues upon an embassy with it to Darius.

When the king came to consider the crimes that were charged upon the Samaritans, he gave them a letter, addressed to the officers and lieutenants of that province, and the senate of Samaria, in words to this purport:

" King Darius to Tangar and Samba-

^{*} We are here supplied with an additional proof that, on the return of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity, many also of each of the other tribes returned with them from Assyria, Babylonia, and Media, whither they had been carried; and, joining with them in the rebuilding of the temple, partook in the solemnity of the dedication; otherwise, there is no reason why the sin-offering should now be offered in behalf of all the twelve tribes. Since, however, the greater part of those who returned consisted of the tribe of Judah, their name swallowed up the names of all the rest; for, from this time, the whole people of Israel, of what tribe soever they were, began to be called Jews, and by that name they have been known ever since all the world over.—Dean Prideaux.

and to Sadrack, Bobelon, and the rest of their subjects there, sendeth greeting .-Whereas I am given to understand by «Zerubbabel, Ananias, and Mardochæus, to bear part in the charge of the sacrifices, which by my order and command you ought to have done,—this is to require you, upon the sight of this letter, forthwith to supply them out of my treasury in Samaria, with whatsoever they shall want for the use of their sacrifices and worship, to the end that they may offer up daily prayers and oblations, both for myself and for the people."

This put a full end to all contest about the matter, and was the last good office we find recorded in scripture that Darius did the Jews. For in the thirty-sixth year of his reign he died, and was succeeded by Xerxes, the eldest of his sons by Atossa,*

* Darius had three sons by his first wife, the daughter of Gobrias, all born before his advancement to the throne, and four others by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who were all born after it. Of the former, Artabazanes was the eldest; of the latter, Xerxes: and, as Darius advanced in years, between these two was the competition for the succession. Artabazanes urged, that as he was the eldest son, according to the custom and usage of all nations, he ought to be preferred before any that was younger. But Xerxes replied to this, that he was the son of Darius by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who was the first founder of the Persian empire; for which reason he held it just and reasonable, that the crown of Cyrus should rather come to a descendant of Cyrus, than to one that was not; and to this he added, that though Artabazanes was the eldest son of Darius, yet he was not the eldest son of a king; that he was born when he was only a private person, and could therefore claim no more than to be heir of his private fortunes; but that, as to himself, he was the first-born after his father was king, and had therefore the best right to succeed him in the kingdom. Whereupon he was nominated to the succession, but not so much for the strength of his plea as for the influence which his mother Atossa had over the inclinations of her husband .- Prideaux's Connection, Anno 486.—The account given of this affair by Plutarch, in his treatise of brotherly love, differs materially. "When Darius died," he informs us, "some contended that Ariamenes should succeed him, as being eldest; others recommended Xerxes, because Atossa, daughter of thousand, six hundred and ten men: so that the

ba, the master of the horse at Samaria, daughter to Cyrus, the great founder of the Persian monarchy.

It is recorded of Xerxes, that he confirmed to the Jews all the privileges that his Father Darius had granted them, and on the part of the Jews, that you stand ac- particularly that which assigned them the cused of interrupting and discouraging the tribute of Samaria, for the charge of the rebuilding of the temple, and of refusing sacrifices, that were to be offered in the temple of Jerusalem. It is of him that the words of the prophet Daniel are meant; Behold there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia,' (which were Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius Hystaspes,) and the fourth shall be far richer than they all; and by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia:' for the story is well known, with what a prodigious armament, both by sea and land, he set out against the Greeks, † and

> Cyrus, was his mother, and he was born whilst Darius was actually king. Ariamenes, accordingly, went to Media, not with any hostile views, but peaceably to have the matter determined. Xerxes, who was on the spot, exercised the royal functions: but as soon as his brother arrived, he laid aside his crown and kingly ornaments, and hastened to salute him. He senthim various presents, and words to this effect: 'Xerxes your brother sends you these presents, to show how much he honours you. If the Persians shall elect me king, you shall be next to myself.' The reply of Ariamenes was, 'I accept your presents; the crown I believe to be my right: I shall honour all my brethren, and Xerxes in particular. When the day of decision arrived, the Persian selected as judge Artabanus, the brother of Darius. Xerxes, who depended on the multitude, objected to him, for which he was censured by his mother Atossa: Why, she observed, "should you refuse to have your uncle as judge, one of the worthiest men in Persia? and why dread a contest, where if inferior you will still be next to the king?" Xerxes suffered him-self to be persuaded, and after hearing the arguments of both, Artabanus adjudged the crown to Xerxes. Ariamenes on this hastily arose, made obeisance to his brother, and taking him by the hand, conducted him to the throne."-Beloe.

> + After he had passed over the Hellespont, his land-army upon the muster, was found to be one million, and seven hundred thousand foot, and fourscore thousand horse, besides his chariots and camels, for which allowing twenty thousand more, the whole w.ll amount to one million, and eight hundred thousand men. His fleet consisted of twelve hundred and twenty ships of the line of battle, besides galleys, transports, victuallers, and other sorts of vessels that attended, which were three thousand more; and on board of all these were reckoned to be five hundred and seventeen

with what foul disgrace he returned home from the inglorious expedition, when falling into contempt with his own subjects, not a long while after, he was murdered by the captain of his guard.*

whole number of forces, by sea and land, which Xerxes brought with him out of Asia to invade Greece, amounted to two millions three hundred and seventeen thousand, six hundred and ten men. After his passing the Hellespout, the nations on the other side, that submitted to him, added to his land-army three hundred thousand men more, and two hundred and twenty ships to his fleet, on board of which were twenty-four thousand men; and the servants, eunuchs, women, suttlers, and all such other people as followed the camp, were computed to be no less than as many more. So that the whole number of the persons of all sorts that followed Xerxes in this expedition, were, at least, five millions. This is Herodotus's account of that armament: and, considering that he is the most ancient author that has written of this war; was himself alive when it happened; and has treated of it with greater appearance of exactness than any other; there is reason to believe that his computation is the truest.—Prideaux's Con-

* The circumstances connected with his death are thus related: On his return from his ill-fated expedition, he renounced all thoughts of war and conquest, and abandoned himself entirely to luxury and ease, being studious of nothing but his pleasures. Artabanus, a native of Hyrcania, captain of his guards, who had long been one of his chief favourites, found that his dissolute conduct had drawn upon him the contempt of his subjects. He therefore imagined that this would be a favourable opportunity to conspire against his sovereign; and he carried his ambitious views so far as to flatter himself with the hopes of succeeding him in the throne. It is very likely, that he was excited to the commission of this crime from another motive. Xerxes had commanded him to murder Darius, his eldest son, but for what cause history is silent. As this order had been given at a banquet, and when the company was heated with wine, he did not doubt but that Xerxes would forget it, and therefore was not in haste to obey it; however, he was mistaken, for the king complained of his disobedience, which made Artabanus dread his resentment, and therefore he resolved to prevent him. Accordingly he prevailed upon Mithridates, one of the eunuchs of the palace, and high chamberlain, to engage in his conspiracy; and by his means entered the chamber where the king lay, and murdered him in his sleep. He then went immediately to Artaxerxes, the third son of Xerxes. He informed him of the murder, charging Darius his eldest brother with it; as if impatience to ascend the throne had prompted him to that execrable deed. He added, that to secure the crown to himself, he was resolved to murder him also, for which reason it would be absolutely necessary for him to keep upon his guard. These words having made the impression on Artaxerxes,

CHAPTER VI.

Xerxes is succeeded by his son Artaxerxes.— Story of Esther, Haman, and Mordecai.

On the demise of Xerxes, the king of Media and Persia, the government devolved on his son Ahasuerus, otherwise Artaxerxes, in whose reign over the

who was still a youth, which Artabanus desired, he went immediately into his brother's apartment, where, being assisted by Artabanus and his guards, he murdered him. Hystaspes, Xerxes's second son, was next heir to the crown after Darius; but as he was then in Bactriana, of which he was governor, Artabanus seated Artaxerxes on the throne, with the design of suffering him to enjoy it no longer than till he had formed a faction strong enough to drive him from it, and ascend it himself. His great authority had gained him a multitude of dependents; besides this, he had seven sons, who were tall, handsome, strong, courageous, and raised to the highest employments in the empire. The aid he hoped to receive from them, was the chief motive of his raising his views so high. But whilst he was attempting to complete his design, Artaxerxes being informed of this plot by Megabyzus, who had married one of his sisters, endeavoured to anticipate him, and killed him before he had an opportunity of putting his treason into execution. His death established this prince in the possession of the kingdom.-Rollin.

† Usher is of opinion, that Darius Hystaspes was the king Ahasuerus, who married Esther, viz. that Atossa was the Vashti, and Artystona the Esther of the holy scriptures. But Herodotus positively tells us, that Artystona was the daughter of Cyrus, and therefore could not be Esther, and that Atossa had four sons by Darius, besides daughters, all born to him after he was king, and therefore she could not be that queen Vashti who was divorced from the king her husband in the third year of his reign, Esther i. 3. nor he that Ahasuerus that divorced her. Joseph Scaliger is like-wise of opinion, that Xerxes was the Ahasuerus, and Hamestris his queen, the Esther of the holy scriptures: but, whatever seeming similitude there may be in the names, (and this is the whole foundation of his conjecture,) it is plain from Herodotus, that Xerxes had a son by Hamestris, who was marriageable in the seventh year of his reign, and therefore it is impossible that he should be Esther's, because Esther was not married to Ahasuerus until the seventh year of his reign, (Esther ii. 16.) and, considering that the choice of virgins was made for him in the fourth of his reign, and a whole year employed in their purifications, the soonest that she could have a son by him, must be in the sixth, and therefore we may conclude, (with Josephus, the Septuagint, and the Apocryphal additions to the Book of Esther,) that the Ahasuerus in scripture was Artaxerxes Longimanus, and Esther an Hebrew virgin, as she is all along represented .- Prideaux's Connection.



Persians the whole nation of the Jews, with their wives and children, were in great danger of being utterly destroyed.

When Artaxerxes had ascended the throne, and settled the governors of one hundred and twenty-seven provinces between India and Ethiopia, he made a most magnificent and sumptuous feast at Susa, in the third year of his reign, where he treated his friends and officers as became the dignity of so great a prince; and the solemnity lasted a hundred and fourscore days. There were several other nations also, and their ambassadors, that assisted at the ceremony of the entertainment seven whole days successively; it was ordered after this manner:

There was a tent erected upon gold and silver pillars, covered with fine linen and purple, and large enough to receive some thousands of people. The wine was served up in cups of gold and precious stones, that were made both for curiosity and delight. There were orders given to the waiters, after the Persian manner, that no man should be forced to drink any more than he had a mind to, and proclamation made all over his dominions, that they should set some certain number of days apart for the celebration of a festival for the prosperity and safety of the kingdom. Queen Vashti had her apartment also in the palace for the entertainment of the women.*

As she was a woman of great beauty, the king was desirous of showing her to his guests, and sent for her to come into his presence; but as the laws of Persia allowed not wives to be seen by any men except their domestics, she refused to go to the king, and upon several orders brought her by the eunuchs to the same purpose, she persisted still in the denial.

The king was so incensed at her obstinacy, that after the festival was over, he called for the seven commissioners that were expressly appointed for the interpretation of the Persian laws, to advise with, what was to be done in this case of his wife's contumacy and disobedience; complaining that it was not only once, but over and over that she refused to come to him; and therefore desired to know what the law directed in that case. One of them, whose name was Memucan, gave his opinion, "That it was not only an affront to himself in the matter of fact. but a precedent of dangerous consequence to his subjects in general, whose wives would be apt to despise their husbands too. and by that contempt provoke them to lewd courses, if this exemplary contumacy

Dr A. Clarke.

^{*} The women do not eat with the men in the Eastern feasts: it is however usual for them to feast at the same time by themselves. Thus Maillet, after having given an account of the extraordinary feasting at the castle of Grand Cairo, upon the circumcision of the son of the bashaw of Egypt, tells us, that he was assured that the expense which was incurred at the same time in the apartments of the women of the bashaw, was not much less considerable than what appeared in public; there being there the same liberalities, the same pleasures, the same abundance, and the same magnificence, that appeared out of those apartments.—Harmer.

And much should she be commended for it. What woman, possessing even a common share of prudence and modesty, could consent to expose herself to the view of such a group of drun-ken Bacchanalians? Her courage was equal to her modesty: she would resist the royal mandate, rather than violate the rules of chaste decorum. Her contempt of worldly grandeur, when brought in competition with what every modest woman holds dear and sacred, is worthy of observation. She well knew that this act of disobedience would cost her her crown, if not her life also: but she was regardless of both, as she con-ceived her virtue and honour were at stake. Her humility was greatly evidenced in this refusal. She was beautiful; and might have shown herself to great advantage, and have had a fine opportunity of gratifying her vanity, if she had any: but she refused to come. Hail, noble woman! be thou a pattern to all thy sex on every similar occasion! Surely, every thing considered, we have few women like Vashti; for some of the highest of the land will dress and deck themselves with the utmost splendour, even to the selvedge of their fortunes, to exhibit themselves at balls, plays, galas, operas, and public assemblies of all kinds (nearly half naked,) that they may be seen and admired of men, and even, to the endless reproach and broad suspicion of their honour and chastity, figure away in masquerades! Vashti must be considered at the top of her sex ;-

[&]quot;Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno."

A black swan is not half so rare a bird.

of the queen's against so mighty a king should pass unpunished; concluding, that as it was a heinous offence, so it ought to be treated with severity; and that nothing less would satisfy than the banishing of Vashti from the king's court and presence for ever. And this to be done by proclamation, and another taken in her place."

The king was so divided between the love he had for the queen, and the respect he had for the law, the one being against their parting, and the other against their living together, that he was distracted by this difficulty of acting against his inclination.

While he was in the anxiety of mind, his friends plied him with good offices and counsel, to divert him from the weakness of making himself miserable for the unprofitable love of one woman, when he might have the greatest beauties upon the face of the earth at his devotion, if he thought fit to command them; so that he had no more to do, but to get sight of her, and take her for his wife, out of the whole sex. Variety, and a new love, would quickly wear out the fondness of a former, and a little custom and conversation would bring him to himself again.

The king, upon second thought, was well-pleased with the advice, and sent commissioners immediately over all his dominions, to take a view of the most celebrated beauties they could find, and bring them to him.

They were punctual and diligent in the execution of their charge; and, among others, they found a maid in Babylon, whose name was Esther.*

Her father and mother were both dead,

* This woman was born in Babylon, and therefore, in analogy to that language, they gave her the name of Hadassah, which, in Chaldee, signifies a myrtle; but her Persian name was Esther, which some (a little incongruously) derive from Aster, a star, and others from Satar, which signifies hidden, because she was concealed in Mordecai's house; or rather, because her nation was concealed, and she not known, until Mordecai's merit and services to the crown came to be rewarded.—Patrick's Commentary.

and she was brought up under the care of her uncle Mordecai, who was one of the tribe of Benjamin, and a capital man among the Jews.

This virgin was so much beyond all the rest, for the graces of her person, that she was the admiration of every one who saw her.

She was committed to the care of one of the eunuchs,† where she was treated with all possible delicacy and respect; that is, according to the custom of Eastern nations, endowed with the richest of essences and perfumes, and all other ornamental curiosities, that were made use of by great ladies, to render them more agreeable and charming.

In this manner was Esther treated for the space of twelve months,‡ in company with four hundred virgins; after which time, being thus prepared for the king's bed, he had every day one of them brought him, whom he received into his arms, and then sent back again to the care of the same eunuch.

But when it came to Esther's turn, he was so transported with her company and conversation that he took her to himself for his lawful wife, and celebrated the nuptials in the seventh year of his reign, and

† In the courts of Eastern kings, the care of the beds and apartments is generally committed to eunuchs. The Hebrew saris signifies a real eunuch, whether naturally born such or rendered such; but in scripture this word often denotes an officer belonging to a prince, attending his court, and employed in the interior of his palace.

[†] The reason is assigned by the sacred historian, for their being kept so long in this course, namely, that for six months they might be anointed with the oil of myrrh, which, besides the fra grancy of its smell, was good to make the skin soft and smooth, and clear it from all manner of scurf; and for six more, with sweet odours, which in these hot countries were necessary to take away all ill scents, and (as some think) to make the body more vigorous. But, besides this, there might be something of state in making those vassals (for such they were accounted) wait, before they were admitted to the honour of the king's bed; and something of precaution too, in keeping them secluse for so long a time, that the king might be satisfied that he was not imposed upon by a child begotten by any other man.—Patrick's Commentary and Poole's Annotations.

the twelfth month, which was called Adar, sending his messengers throughout his dominions to proclaim the solemnity of a marriage feeting!

marriage festival.

As for the Medes and Persians, and the great men of other nations, the king himself entertained them at the wedding-feast for the space of one whole month. And upon his wife's entering into the palace, he placed the crown upon her head, and so lived with her without inquiring concerning her country, or her extraction.

Her uncle removed from Babylon to Susa, where he would be often waiting at the king's gate, and still inquisitive after Esther's welfare, who was equally dear to him as his own child.

The king at this time passed an order, that none of his domestics should presume, while he was sitting upon his royal throne, to come to him, unless they were called, or sent for, upon pain of losing their heads; and there were officers with their axes always at hand, to do the execution.

The king in the mean time had a golden sceptre in his hand, and whensoever he had a mind to save any of those that came uncalled, he held that sceptre forth, and upon their touching it, they were exempted from the penalty.

There broke out about this time a conspiracy that was formed between Bigthana and Teresh,* two of the chamberlains, or eunuchs, against the person of the king.

Barnabazus, a servant of one of them, and a Jew by extraction, discovered this treachery to Mordecai, the queen's uncle; and he, by the hands of Esther, to the The king gave Mordecai no other reward for his discovery than by appointing the service and deliverance to be registered upon the record, and allowing him admittance into the palace, with the same freedom and privilege as one of his domestics.

Haman, the son of Hammedatha, an Amalekite, being now advanced by the king, and coming frequently to court, the Persians, as well as strangers, paid him the greatest reverence; and it was the king's pleasure and command that it should be so. Mordecai was the only person that did not bow to him, being a ceremony contrary to the practice of his country.†

king himself, who relied so much on her affection and loyalty, that he put the criminals to the question; and upon conviction, they were both delivered up to justice.

^{*} These were two great men, who perhaps kept the door of the king's bed-chamber, and being either incensed at the divorce of Vashti, (whose creatures they were) or at the advancement of Esther, who, in all probability, would raise her kinsman Mordecai to a superiority over them, took disgust thereat, and so resolved to revenge themselves on the king for it.—Prideaux's Connection and Patrick's Commentary

⁺ Haman, we read, was an Amalekite, one of that nation against which God pronounced a curse; and, therefore, upon this consideration, Mordecai might think himself not obliged to pay him the reverence which he expected; if the rest of the Jews had the like notion of him, this might be reason sufficient for his extending his resentment against the whole nation. But there seems to be something more in the reverence which the people were commanded to pay him than what is the effect of civil respect. The king of Persia, we know, expected a kind of divine adoration from all that approached his presence; as we read of one Timagoras, upon whom the people of Athens passed sentence of death, for his worshipping of Darius, accounting the honour of their whole city debased by this mean submission of one of their citizens, though at that time Darius was one of the greatest monarchs upon earth. And as the kings of Persia did arrogate this to themselves, so they sometimes imparted it to their chief friends and favourites, as it seems at this time to have been the For we can hardly conceive case with Haman. why the king should give a particular command, that all his servants should reverence him, if by this reverence no more is intended, than that they should show him a respect suitable to his station: but now, if we suppose that the homage expected from them was such as came near to idolatry, we need not wonder that a Jew should deny that honour, or the outward expressions of it to any man, since the wise and sober Grecians did positively refuse to give it to the very kings themselves. And, that this was the case before us, the author of the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther seems to imply, when he introduces Mordecai as

Haman, taking notice of this singularity, asked him what countrymen he was? And finding him to be a Jew, broke out into a violent exclamation at the insolence of such a miscreant, that when all the natives, and the free-born Persians, with the greatest willingness did him that honour, this Jew, who was no better than a slave, should presume to affront him.

In this rage he took a resolution to be revenged upon Mordecai; * and the hatred he had for the Jews was so mortal, that it was not sufficient, he thought, to wreak his vengeance upon the person of Mordecai alone, without destroying the whole race at once; calling to mind, at the same time, that the Amalekites, his countrymen, had been formerly driven out of their land, and utterly exterminated by that people.

praying in these words,—'Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is not contumacy, nor pride, nor desire of vain glory, that makes me not worship Haman; for I would willingly kiss his feet for the safety of Israel. But I do it, that I may not prefer the glory of a man to the glory of God, nor adore any one but thee, my Lord alone.'—Stackhouse.

* The conduct of Haman presents a very lively

picture of a proud grandee of the East at the present day, and of the revenge which he always meditates against any who neglect to pay him the customary tokens of respect. The name and place of residence of the offender will be immediately inquired after, and the first opportunity taken to let him feel the consequences of his presumption. The case of Muttoo-Chadde-appa, related by Mr Roberts, is illustrative of this disposition. A Moorman of high bearing and great riches, had purchased the rent of the pearl fishery of the Bay of Ondachy, and in consequence was a person of great influence amongst the people. The proud Mordelian was one day passing along the road, where was seated on his carpet the renter of the pearl fishery. He arose not, bowed not to him, when passing by, and the Mordelian's soul was fired with indignation; he forthwith resolved upon his ruin, and by deeply formed intrigues too well succeeded. The rent was taken from the Moorman—his estates were sold, and, to make up the deficiency, he himself was disposed of by auction, for the payment of his debts, and the Mordelian became his purchaser. Such are the ways in which offended pride takes its revenge in the East. The case of this modern grandee is a specimen of all his class; and although the proceedings of Haman against the bold Jew who ventured to refuse the customary submission to the favourite, were not consummated, yet we may consider them as an exhibition of the determined revenge with which a great man in the East will resent any indignity offered to his honour.—Jamieson.

In the heat of his indignation, he hastened to the king, and accosted him with a complaint against the Jews, as a vile generation of people in every respect, unsociable in their disposition, singular in their manners, given up to superstitious laws and ceremonies, scattered up and down in all quarters of his dominions, and men that showed themselves in their practices and conversation the common enemies of mankind.

"Now," says Haman, "if you would lay the greatest obligation of loyalty upon your subjects, you must order this sort of men to be rooted out from among your people, without sparing so much as one captive, or one servant. And, for our security, that you shall not suffer by it in your revenue, I will be answerable for ten thousand talents of silver, † to be paid into

⁺ Haman was outrageously bent against the Jews, and what he offered to the king in lieu of the damage which his revenues might sustain by the destruction of so many of his subjects, is a prodigious sum for any private man to be owner of; but we read of several such persons in history, who, in those ancient times, were possessors of much greater. Puthius the Lydian, for instance, when Xerxes passed into Greece, was possessed of two thousand talents of silver, and four millions of daricks in gold, which together amounted to near five millions and a half of our sterling money: and Marcus Crassus, the Roman, after he had consecrated the tenth of what he had to Hercules, feasted all the people of Rome at ten thousand tables, and given a donative of corn to every citizen, as much as would last him three months, found the remainder of his estate to be seven thousand one hundred Roman talents, which amount to above a million and a half of our money. This may seem a little strange to us at present, but our wonder will cease, if we consider, that, from the time of David and Solomon, and for fifteen hundred years afterwards, the riches of this kind were in much greater plenty than they are now. The prodigious quantities of gold and silver which Alexander found in the treasures of Darius; the vast loads of them, which were often carried before the Roman generals when they returned from conquered provinces; and the excessive sums which certain of their emperors expended in donatives, feasts, shows, and other instances of luxury and prodigality, are of this proof sufficient: but, at length, the mines of the ancient Ophir, which furnished all this plenty, being exhausted, and, by the burning of cities, and devastation of countries, which followed upon the eruptions of the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, and other barbarous nations in the west, and of the

your treasury, out of my own estate; for I shall not value any diminution of my particular fortune, provided that your dominions may be cleared of this people."

The king told Haman, upon this proposal, that he would leave the Jews to be dealt with according to his discretion, and remit the money over and above.

Haman immediately upon this published an edict in the king's name, and sealed it with his ring,* and sent it abroad through all his dominions, to this effect:

"The great king Artaxerxes, to the hundred and twenty-seven governors of the provinces, between India and Ethiopia, greeting.-Whereas it hath pleased God to give me the command of many nations, and a dominion over the rest of the world, as large as I can desire, -being resolved to do nothing that may be either tyrannical or grievous towards my people, and to bear a gentle and an easy rule over them, with an eye to the preserving of their peace and liberties, in the first place, and the settling them in a state of tranquillity and happiness, not to be shaken.

Saracens, Turks, and Tartars, in the east, a great part of the gold and silver, which the world then abounded with, being wasted and destroyed by this means, the great scarcity of both, which afterwards ensued, was occasioned; nor have the mines of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil been as yet able fully to

repair it. - Stackhouse.

"All this I have taken into mature consideration; and being given to understand, by my truly and well-beloved friend and counsellor, Haman, a person of approved fidelity, prudence, and justice, and whom I esteem above all others, that there is a mixture of an inhuman kind of people among my subjects, who take upon them to govern by their own laws, and to prescribe ways to themselves in contempt of public order and government; men depraved both in their customs and manners; and enemies, not only to monarchy, but to methods of our royal administration; this is therefore to will and require you, that upon notice given unto you by Haman, (who is to me as a father,) of the persons intended by this proclamation, you put all the said persons, men, women, and children, to the sword, without any favour or regard to person or sex, in a strict pursuance of my decree.

"And it is farther commanded, that you put this in execution upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of this present year; to complete in one day the destruction of all mine and your enemies, in order to a future peace and security during the remainder of our lives."

This edict was quickly spread from town to town,+ throughout the whole

^{*} The very ancient custom of sealing despatches with a seal or signet set in a ring is still retained in the East. Thus in Egypt, Dr Pococke says, they make the impression of their name with their seal, generally of cornelian, which they wear on their finger, and which is blacked when they have occasion to seal with it. And Mr Hanway remarks, that the Persian ink serves not only for writing, but for subscribing with a seal: indeed, many of the Persians in high office could not write. In their rings they wear agates, which serve for seals, on which is frequently engraved their name, and some verse from the Koran. So also Dr Shaw:—As few or none of the Arab Sheiks, or of Turkish and Eastern kings, princes, or bashaws, know to write their own names, all their letters and decrees are stamped with their proper rings, seals, or signets, which are usually of silver or cornelian, with their respective names engraved upon them on one side, and the name of their kingdom or principality, or else some sentence of the Koran, on the other. The art and practice of engraving names on a signet is as old as Moses .- Parkhurst.

⁺ The first institution of posts is generally ascribed to the Persians: for the kings of Persia, (as Diodorus Siculus, lib. xix. observes.) that they might have intelligence of what passed in all the provinces of their vast dominions, placed sentinels on eminences, at convenient distances where towers were built, and these sentinels gave notice of public occurrences to one another, with a very loud and shrill voice, by which means news was transmitted from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, with great expedition. But as this could be practised only in the case of general news, which might be communicated to the whole nation, Cyrus (as Xenophon relates, Cyropæd. lib. viii.) set up couriers, places for post-horses on all high-roads, and offices where they might deliver their packets to one another. This, says our author, they did night and day; so that no rain or hard weather being to stop them, in the judgment of many, they went faster than cranes could fly. The like is said by Herodotus, lib. viii. And he acquaints us farther, that Xerxes, in his famous expedition against Greece, planted posts from the Ægean sea to Shushan, at certain distances, as far

selves accordingly to execute the bloody design upon the Jews at the day appointed. And there was the same disposition to mischief at Susa, the king's place of residence, as at all other parts.

The king and Haman all this while passed their time in drinking, feasting, and merry-making. But the people of the town were under very dismal apprehensions at the thought of the barbarous massacre.

As soon as Mordecai came to be informed of the tenor and intent of this proclamation, he rent his garments, put on sackcloth, and went up and down the town with ashes on his head, exclaiming against the horrid injustice of so bloody a design upon the Jews.

In this inconsolable plight, he roved about till he came at last to stop before the gate of the king's palace.*

as a horse could ride with speed, that thereby he might send notice to his capital city of whatever might happen in his army. The Greeks borrowed the use of posts from the Persians. Among the Romans, Augustus was the person who set up public posts, who at first were running footmen, but were afterwards changed into post-chariots, and horses, for the greater expedition. Adrian improved upon this; and, having reduced the posts to great regularity, discharged the people from the obligation they were under before, of furnishing horses and chariots. With the empire, the use of posts declined. About the year 807, Charlemaigne endeavoured to restore them, but his design was not prosecuted by his successors. In France, Lewis XI. set up posts at two leagues distance through the kingdom. In Germany, Count Taxis set them up, and had, for his recompense, in 1616, a grant of the office of post-master general, to himself and his heirs for ever. Above eight hundred years ago, couriers were set up in the Ottoman empire; and, at this time, there are some among the Chinese; but their appointment is only to carry orders from the king and the governors of provinces, and, in a word, for public affairs, and those of the greatest consequence.-

* It is evident that the anxiety of Mordecai for Esther was extreme; but we cannot fully enter into the circumstance of his walking day after day, for a long period of time, probably upwards of a year, without recollecting the extreme vigilance with which the harems of the East are guarded. On this subject Chardin says: "The place where the women are shut up is sacred, especially among

empire, and the people prepared them- resentment and behaviour of the Jews was the same in all other places, as at court, upon the issuing of the king's or-

person whatever to be inquiring what passes within those walls. The husband has there an absolute authority, without being obliged to give any account of his actions. And it is said, that there are most bloody doings in those places sometimes, and that poison despatches a world of people, which are thought to die a natural death." Again he says, "I could not learn what was done more the rest of the night; for I have already informed you how difficult it is to be informed of the transactions in those habitations, that seem to be re-gions of another world. There are none but women that can approach within a league of it, or some black eunuchs, with whom a man may as well converse as with so many dragons, that can discover those secrets; and you may as well tear out their hearts as a syllable upon that text. You must use a great deal of art to make them speak; just as we tame serpents in the Indies, till they make them hiss and dance when they please." He likewise observes in another place, "What is done in the woman's apartment is a mystery concealed even from the grandees and prime ministers. Or, if they know any thing, it is merely upon the account of some particular relation or dependence which the secret has to some peculiar affair which of necessity, must be imparted to their knowledge. A man may walk a hundred days one after another by the house where the women are, and yet know no more what is done therein, than at the further end of Tartary." These hints may account for the conduct of Mordecai, who, (1.) walked every day before the court of the women's house, to gather any intelligence that might chance to come within his cognizance, respecting his niece. An English reader is apt to say, "Why did he not visit her at once?" or, "To be sure, when he walked before the court, he inquired of the servants, and they told him as a matter of course." No: he walked, day after day, if perchance he might make some of these "dragons" in any degree tractable. In like manner, the English reader may suppose, that when "Mordecai told Esther the queen" of the treason of the king's chamberlains, he spoke to her personally. This however, is not probable: he sent her the intelligence by intervening agents. And when Mordecai, in the utmost distress, wished to communicate with Esther, "he cried with a loud and bitter cry, even before the king's gate," which was the only mean left him of gaining attention from the attendants of the place; some of whom, coming out to him, returned and told Esther, who was too far off to hear him. Esther sent her own chamberlain, Hatach, (a confidential person, no doubt,) to inquire from Mordecai himself the cause of his lamentation: and, by means of Hatach, messages passed between them, which agrees with what Chardin says, that it is possible on urgent occa-sions to make these officers "speak." We learn also, that there are "bloody doings" in the harem; this agrees with the remark of Mordecai, " Think persons of condition; and it is a crime for any | not that thou shalt escape in the king's house,

ders,-they were every where overwhelm- | vouchsafe to hold forth his golden sceptre ed with lamentations and despair.

When it came to the queen's ear, that Mordecai was before the gate of the palace in that forlorn habit, she was troubled at the report, and sent an attendant out to him to change his garment; but his answer was, that he could not do it, till the cause was first removed for which he assumed it.

It happened that Hatach, one of the king's eunuchs, was at that time in the queen's presence; she therefore called him to her, and sent him out to learn the cause of Mordecai's assuming that dress, and why he should refuse to quit it at her request.

The eunuch put these questions to Mordecai, who related to him the whole story at length, how the king, at the instigation of Haman, had issued out his royal proclamation throughout all his dominions, for the extirpating of the Jews, and also how vast a sum of money Haman had offered by way of composition, for to do it.

Mordecai gave him a true copy of the edict, from the original, to be delivered to the queen; desiring farther, that she would make an humble application to the king upon this matter, and intercede with him on their behalf; representing to her the necessity of an immediate interposition, as the lives of the whole nation were in question; and as Haman, who was at the king's right hand, would never leave calumniating the Jews, and exasperating the king against them, till he had gained his point.

Upon the eunuch's giving the queen this account of the matter, she sent Mordecai word, "That it was a capital crime to break in upon the king when he was upon his throne of state, without being called to attend him, unless he should in token of his pardon."*

When he heard this, he pressed the queen again, by the same messenger, telling her, that it was not her own personal safety that was now in question, but the security of the whole race; advising her likewise, by no means to neglect the present opportunity of doing so necessary and charitable an office, and assuring her, that God himself would relieve them, even if she should neglect to do it. And that she and her family might live to be at the mercy of those whom she now despised. .

Esther, by the same messenger, desired her uncle to call an assembly of the Jews at Susa, and hold a three days' fast + for the safety of the queen; informing him, that she and her servants would do the like; and that after this preparation, she was resolved to go to the king, in despite

ple were to take no manner of sustenance for three days, because few or none could undergo that; but only, either that they should abstain from all delicacies, and content themselves with coarse fare, as Josephus expounds it, or that they should make no set meals of dinner or supper in their families, but eat and drink no more than would suffice to sustain nature, and support them in prayer to God for a blessing upon her undertaking.-Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

^{*} Ever since the reign of Dejoces, king of Media, Herodotus informs us, that, for the preservation of royal majesty, it was enacted, "That no one should be admitted into the king's presence; but that, if he had any business with him, he should transact it by the intercourse of his ministers." The custom passed from the Medes to the Persians, and therefore we find it in the same historian, lib. iii. that, after the seven Persian princes had killed the Magian, who had usurped the throne, they came to this agreement, that whoever should be elected king, should allow the others to have at all times a ready access to his presence, (which is an implication that they had it not before,) whenever they should desire it, except only when he was accompanying with any of his wives. This therefore was the ancient law of the country, and not procured by Haman, as some imagine; though it cannot be denied, but that the reason of the law at first might be, not only the preservation of the majesty, and safety of the king's person, but a contrivance likewise of the great officers of state, that they might engross the king to themselves, by allowing admittance to none but whom they should think proper to introduce.—Poole's Annotations, and Le Clerc's Commentary.

† This is not to be understood, as if the peo-

more than all the Jews." He certainly means that Haman would procure her death, even in, the harem .- Calmet.

of all prohibition and danger; as she must die, she would frankly resign her life in

the service of her country.

Mordecai, in compliance with the queen's order, appointed a public fast, and humbled himself in supplications to Almighty God, to defeat the malice of their enemies; and, according to his wonted goodness, extend his mercy to penitent offenders, and finally to deliver them from the destruction denounced against them. Representing, "That it was not for any fault of their own that they were exposed to this extremity, but through the pride of Haman's heart, who thought it an indignity offered to himself in being denied that adoration to him, which was due to God alone. And that a whole nation was not to be rooted out, because they would not be corrupted into a violation and contempt of the divine laws."

The devotion of the whole multitude was to the same effect; desiring God to vouchsate them his protection, and avert that dreadful judgment from the Israelites, that now hung over their heads. The queen worshipped likewise with her face prostrate on the ground, after the manner of her country, in her mourning garment, and imposing upon herself a three days' abstinence from either meat or drink, or any other sensual gratification, beseeching God to move the king's heart, in favour of her mediation for a miserable and persecuted people, by rendering both her words and her person more acceptable than ever, upon this fatal extremity, to the confusion of their enemies, and of all their malicious designs upon her poor distressed countrymen.

After three days spent in fervent and pious importunity for mercy and compassion from the throne of divine grace, the queen put on her royal apparel; and with her two handmaids bearing up her train, advanced towards the king; her face being covered with such a blush as expressed both grace and majesty, but at the same time some doubtful apprehension; for

upon the sight of the king mounted on his throne, and the effulgence of his robes, that were embroidered with gold and precious stones, she suddenly was seized with a trembling. And upon fancying (which affected her more than all his splendour) that the king looked upon her as if he was discomposed, and out of humour, she fell into the arms of one of her maids in a swoon.* This accident, by the intervention of God's holy will and providence, alarmed the king, who, fearing she might not recover, hastily descended from his throne, took her into his arms, and, with the kindest words, gave her this comfort, that no advantage should be made of the law to her prejudice, though she came without calling; for that was a decree that extended only to the subjects, wherein she was not at all concerned, whom he looked upon as his companion and partner in the empire.

With these words he put his golden sceptre into her hands, and laying it gently upon her neck, secured her from any further fear or danger.

This instance of tenderness both of love and assurance, revived the affrighted queen, who thus addressed the king:—
"Sir, it is impossible for me to express the manner of this sudden seizure; but I had no sooner the awful appearance of your sacred person and majesty in my view, than my heart failed me."

She accompanied these words with so languishing an accent, and so weak a voice, that the lively representation of what she felt made the king more solicitous to comfort her, which he did in terms so explicit, that he bade her ask him any thing, to the one half of his kingdom, and that it should be given her.

Esther replied, that her only request

This circumstance of the queen's swooning is not mentioned in any of the canonical chapters of the book of Esther, but in the fifteenth of the Apocryphal; and in the sixteenth, the king is called Artaxerxes, but in the book of Esther he is called Ahasuerus.

was this, that he would be pleased to take | Zeresh, with a company of his friends part of an entertainment with her that day, which she had provided for him, and permit Haman to come with him.

So when the king was in his cups, and in good humour, he called upon his wife as before, to ask what she pleased within that compass, and it should be granted her.

The queen begged the king's favour for the same honour again the day following at another entertainment, * and to bring Haman along with him again; and informed him, she would then take the freedom to present her petition.

The king was well pleased with the proposition; and Haman was overjoyed to find himself the only man that was singled out upon so honourable an occasion, to bear king company at a royal banquet+

In his return home, he happened to see Mordecai the Jew in the king's palace; and taking notice that he paid him no sort of reverence, he went to his wife

how much he was in the good graces of the king and the queen; how he had sup-Her suit was granted, and they both came. ped with them that day, upon a particular invitation, and was to be with them tomorrow again upon the same account.

"But," says he, "the insolent stiffness of the Jew Mordecai, gives me no small uneasiness."

about him, and there told them the story

Upon which his wife gave him this counsel: Order a gallows of fifty cubits high to be immediately set up, and obtain the king's permission to-morrow morning to hang up Mordecai upon it.

Haman took his wife's counsel, and commanded his people to erect such a gallows in his own palace, which he designed for the execution of the Jews; and the gibbet was set up accordingly. But God, who foresees and orders all events, disappointed wicked Haman in all his impious hopes and purposes; for that very night, the king, finding he could not sleep, and accounting it time lost to lie idle and waking, chose rather to employ his thoughts upon some subject that might turn to the advantage of his government, and therefore commanded his secretary to bring him his memorials and papers of state, modern as well as ancient, and to read the accounts of them. 1

^{*} Her intention, in desiring thus to entertain the king twice at her banquet, before she made known her petition, was, that thereby she might the more endear herself to him, and dispose him the better to grant her request; for which reason she thought it a piece of no bad policy to invite his first fa-vourite to come along with him. But, in the whole matter, the singular providence of God is not a little conspicuous, which so disposed her mind, that the high honour, which the king bestowed upon Mordecai the next day, might fall out in the mean time, and so make way for her petition, which would come in very seasonably at the banquet of wine: for as then it was most likely for the king to be in a pleasant humour, so it was most usual for the Persians to enter upon business of state, when they began to drink.—Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries, and Prideaux's Connec-

⁺ Athenæus mentions it as a peculiar honour, which no Grecian ever had before or after, that Artaxerxes condescended to invite Timagoras the Cretan to dine even at the table where his relations ate, and to send sometimes a part of what was served up at his own; which some Persians looked upon as a diminution of his majesty, and a prostitution of their national honour. In the life of Artaxerxes, Plutarch tells us, that none but the king's mother, and his real wife, were permitted to sit at his table; and therefore he mentions it as a condescension in that prince, that he sometimes invited his brothers; so that this particular favour was a matter that Haman had some reason to value himself upon .- Le Clerc's Commentary.

[‡] It may be well asked, why should the king, in such a perturbed state of mind, wish such a dry detail, as chronicles afford, to be read to him? But the truth is, as chronicles were composed among the Persians, he could not have brought before him any work more instructive, and more entertaining, because they were all written in verse, and were generally the work of the most eminent poets in the empire. They are written in this way to the present time; and the famous epic poem of the finest Persian poet, Ferdusi, the Homer of India, is nothing else than a collection of chronicles brought down from the creation to the reign of Mohammed Ghezny, in the beginning of the tenth century. After thirty years' labour, he finished this poem, which contained one hundred and twenty thousand lines; and presented it to the Sultan Mahmoud, who had promised to give him a dinar (eight shillings and sixpence) for every line. The poem was finished A. D. 984; and was formed out of compositions of a similar nature made by former poets. This chronological

The king found, upon the reading of know that you are the kindest friend to them, the name of a person that had great honours and possessions given him, as a reward for a glorious and a remarkable action: and so likewise of another, that made his fortune by the bounties of his prince for his fidelity: coming at last to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs, Bigthana and Teresh, against his own person, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai, the secretary reads it over, and was passing forward to the next; but the king bade him hold, and inquired if that person had any reward given him for his service. The secretary replied, that there was no reward mentioned in the relation, and then the king bade him stop there, and inquire of the attendants what time of night it was; answer being brought that it was break of day, he was commanded to see if there were any of his friends at the palace gate, and bring him word; when he came to look he found Haman, who was earlier up than ordinary, for fear of being too late with his petition to the king against the life of Mordecai. Word being brought to the king that Haman was at the gate, he ordered him to be called in; and upon his entrance into the chamber, spoke to him after this manner: "I

poem is written in all the harmony, strength, and elegance of the most beautiful and harmonious language in the universe; and what adds greatly to its worth is, that it has few Arabic words, with which the beautiful Persian tongue was loaded, and in my opinion corrupted, after the conquest of the major part of Asia by the Mohammedans. The pedants of Hindostan, whether they speak or write, in prose or in verse, affect this commixture of Arabic words; which, though they subjugate them to Persian rules, are producing a ruggedness in a language, which, in Ferdusi, flows deep and strong, like a river of oil, over every kind of channel. Such, I suppose, was the chronicle that was read to Ahasuerus, when his distractions prevented his sleep, and his troubled mind required that soothing repose which the gentle though powerful hand of poetry is alone, in such circumstances, capable of affording. Even our rough English ancestors had their poetic chronicles; and among many, the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester is proof in point. I need not add that all that is real in Ossian is of the same complexion.—Dr A. Clarke.

me in the world; and therefore I would ask your counsel, what mark of honour you would advise me to bestow upon the person that I have the greatest obligation to imaginable; and I will do it with a respect to my own royal dignity, as well as for my affection to my subjects."*

Haman made no doubt of finding his own interest in his resolving this question, and presumed that this character could not be intended to any other than himself: he therefore gave it as his opinion, that the king should clothe the man whom he desired to honour with his own royal apparel, mount him upon his own horse, make him a present of a golden chain, and then cause some one or other of his particular confidents and friends to march before

^{*} In conferring marks of their favour, the kings of Persia do not at once, and as it were by their own will determine the kind of honour that shall be bestowed, but they turn round to the man that stands next in rank to themselves, and ask him what shall be done to the individual who has rendered the service, which they specify; and according to the answer of the favourite, and sometimes of the individual himself, the royal mandate is issued. Looft Ali Khan said to a courtier, whom he had good grounds to suspect of being the murderer of the late king, his father; "What does that man deserve who should behave ill to his sovereign and benefactor?" "To be burnt alive," was the reply. "You are the man," said he, and instantly ordered him to be thrown into a fiery furnace. Sir Robert Shirley mentions another instance to the same purport. On a person being reported to the king as having rendered some important public service, the monarch turned to Shirley, who happened to be nearest the royal person, and said, "What shall be done to the man who has done this thing?" Shirley named a piece of money, and a robe of honour, and the king ordered them to be given. According to this custom, the appeal was made to Haman, in reference the manufacture of the custom. ence to the meritorious Jew, and that haughty minister, vainly supposing the honour could be intended for none but himself, was made the unconscious instrument of conferring on the individual whom, of all men, he most detested, the highest honour which a Persian king could bestow —a coat which had been worn by the monarch himself—one of the royal horses, which it was unlawful for any but the king to bestride without special permission-the crown, which, however, was put on the head not of the rider, but of the steed, and in this royal state to be led by the greatest subject through the principal streets of the city,—a ceremony which is said to occupy several hours.—Jamieson.

him as a herald, and make proclamation all over the city: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king vouchsafes to honour."

Now Haman suggested this counsel to the king, in confidence that he would adjudge this honour to himself, and no other; and the king was highly pleased with the motion; "Whereupon go," says he, "and take the horse, the apparel, and the chain, and when you have found out Mordecai the Jew, equip him in these accoutrements; and when he is mounted, do you march before him in quality of an officer, to make the proclamation; for you, being my particular friend, are the fittest man both to advise with, and to execute your own counsel. I will do this honour to Mordecai, because I am indebted to him for my life."

This order, being entirely unexpected, struck Haman with amazement and surprise: but, notwithstanding his confusion, he durst do no other than execute it; and was obliged to go with the horse, habit, and the gold chain to Mordecai. Therefore finding him at the palace-gate in his rags of humiliation, he bade him strip himself of his sackcloth, and put on that purple. Now the Jew, knowing nothing of the matter, took the whole ceremony for a farce, and treated Haman in plain terms, as a mean insolent wretch, to insult the miserable: but upon a farther reasoning of the matter, Haman convinced him at last, that the king had ordered this honour to be done him in recompence of the service he had rendered him, in saving his life from the conspiracy of the two eunuchs: and being thus convinced, he put on the royal purple, and the golden chain, mounted the king's horse, and took the tour of the city; Haman making proclamation before him, "Thus shall it be done anto him that the king honours."

Mordecai, after this, went to the king, and Haman departed to his own house, where he related to his sorrowful wife and had passed. Upon hearing these circumstances, they found there was no revenging themselves upon Mordecai, for God had taken him into his protection.

As they were in the middle of this discourse, the king's eunuchs came from Esther to call Haman to supper. One of them, whose name was Harbonah, taking notice of a gibbet that was erected in the court, asked one of the servants the meaning of it; and understanding it was prepared for Mordecai, the queen's uncle, for whose execution Haman had designed to intercede with the king, he passed on to his duty. As they were at supper, and all parties pleased with the entertainment, the king put the former day's proposal again to the queen, with an assurance, that let her ask what she pleased, it should not be denied her.

Thus encouraged, she represented, in the most melting strain, the unhappy fate to which the Jewish nation was destined, and gave the king to understand, that this was the subject she desired to lay before him; observing, "That she would by no means interrupt his affairs of state; or if it had been so ordered that her countrymen might have only been sold for slaves, this calamity might have been tolerable: so that she had only this suit to move, that he would be pleased to put a stop to the imminent destruction that was otherwise to be executed upon the whole race."

The king called out presently to know who it was that had any such design on foot. The queen made answer, "That Haman was the author of that advice, and that he did it out of an impulse of pure malice to that people." This discourse put the king out of humour, and rising from the banquet,* he withdrew into the garden.

^{*} The rising of the king from the table, was not a mere involuntary act, done under the impulse of vehement emotion, but it was the usual way in which the Persian kings intimated their will to their attendants, that any individual who had offriends the lamentable account of what king of Persia, says Tavernier, orders a person

Haman by this time found the storm ed abuser of the king's goodness and approaching, and began to apply himself to the queen, with acknowledgments of his mistakes, and desire of pardon; and cast himself upon the bed by her in a way of humiliation and respect. The king returning at the same time, and seeing Haman in that posture upon the bed, was more irritated by that circumstance than by all the rest, calling him the basest and wickedest of men, for so insolent an attempt upon the honour of his wife.* These words were accompanied with such a fierceness of tone and action, that Haman was struck dumb at their utterance.

Upon this the eunuch before mentioned told the king of a gibbet of fifty cubits in height, that Haman had set up for Mordecai in his own court, as he understood by one of his servants, when he was there to give him an invitation to supper. The king immediately took up a resolution of inflicting the same punishment therefore upon Haman, that he had prepared for Mordecai, and ordered him immediately to be hanged upon the same gibbet.+

This was the end of Haman, the wick-

bounty. His body was delivered up tojustice, and his estate given to the queen. The queen had by this time made it known to the king that Mordecai was her kinsman; so that he sent for him, and delivered him the same ring that Haman had been intrusted with before. The possessions of Haman, that the king had granted to the queen, she bestowed upon Mordecai, and then made it her request to his majesty, that he would deliver the Jews out of that apprehension for their lives, under which they yet laboured, reminding him of the letters that Haman the son of Hammedatha had dispersed in his name throughout the empire, making declaration that her own life depended upon the safety of her countrymen and her relations.

The king assured her, on his royal word, that nothing should be done to the Jews without her knowledge and approbation; and he gave her liberty to write what she thought fit, concerning the Jews, in his name, and declared that the letters should be signed, sealed, and dispersed by his orders throughout all his dominions; adding, that when they should be confirmed by the royal signature, their authority would pass without dispute or contradiction; wherefore the king appointed his scribes and secretaries to attend him, commanding them to write letters on the behalf of the Jews to the magistrates of all the nations that lie between India and Ethiopia, under the command of a hundred and twenty-seven governors. which letter the following is a copy:

"Artaxerxes, the great king, to our trusty magistrates, greeting.-Whereas it is a common practice in the world for men that are advanced rather upon favour than merit, not only to insult their inferiors, but to requite their benefactors with ingratitude, as much as in them lies, to extinguish all sense of gratitude or

to be executed, and then rises and goes into the women's apartment, it is a sign that no mercy is to be hoped for. Even the sudden rising of the king in anger was the same as if he had pronounced sentence. Shah Sefi was once greatly offended by some unseasonable jokes which one of his favourites allowed himself in the royal presence. The king immediately rose and retired, upon which the favourite saw that his life was forfeited. He went home in confusion, and in a few hours afterwards the king sent for his head.—Jamieson.

* It was a custom among the Persians, as well as other nations, to sit, or rather to lie upon beds, when they ate or drank; and therefore when Haman fell down, as a suppliant at the feet of Esther, and (as the manner was among the Greeks and Romans, and not improbably among the Persians) embraced her knees, the king might pretend, that he was offering violence to the queen's chastity. Not that he believed that this was his intention, but, in his furious passion, he turned every thing to the worst sense, and made use of it to aggravate his crime.—Calmet's Commentary.

+ We cannot pass over this wonderful concur-

rence of providence, without a remark upon the almighty power and the admirable justice and wisdom of God, not only in bringing Haman to this deserved punishment, but entrapping him in the very snare he had laid for another, and

turning a malicious device upon the head of the

good nature in human society; perverting also, out of pride and weakness of mind, the power and credit that are reposed in them, to the dishonour of their patrons from whom they received it; and under such an appearance too, as if they thought God himself could not see through the disguise.

"Besides that, it is no new thing for state minions to gratify their own private passion, to the prejudice of their masters, by misrepresenting the innocent, and by these ill offices with the prince, to put honest men in danger of their lives.

"I speak not this upon mere report, but upon the certainty of what I have seen with my own eyes, upon proof, not rumour. Wherefore, let no regard be paid for the future to bare accusations, or, in truth, slanders rather; but let the fact be strictly examined, and the person accused either acquitted or punished as he shall be found innocent or guilty.

"It is well known that Haman was by extraction an Amalekite, and not a Persian, and with what tenderness of affection and hospitality I received him; what honours I conferred upon him, even to the degree of calling and esteeming him as my father, and commanding all my subjects to pay him a reverence next in order to what they owed to my own person.

"Now this man was so intoxicated with vanity and arrogance, that, passing all the measures of sobriety and duty, he improved the power I gave him, so far as in him lay, toward the supplanting of me in my kingdom, and the destroying of that person by treacherous practices, to whom I stand indebted for my life and government. I speak of Mordecai, my benefactor and preserver; and of my dearest wife the queen likewise, whom I esteem as the one half of my own soul, and my partner in the empire. His plot being in the first place perfidiously to attempt the lives of my most loyal friends and then to seize upon my crown and government.

"Now forasmuch as the lewd designs of this wicked man are unquestionably notorious, and particularly his bloody and barbarous contrivance for the total extirpation of the Jews, this is to notify and declare, that I find these people so far from being troublesome or seditious, as he represented them, that, on the contrary, I highly approve of their institutions, ways, and manners, as a people worshipping the same God, to whose bounty and protection our family stands indebted both for the possession and preservation of our empire.

"It is therefore our royal pleasure, by these presents, not only to discharge the same people of all the pains and penalties to which they were made liable by our letters communicated to you by the hand of Haman, but likewise that you treat them with all manner of gentleness and respect; having caused the author of this malicious persecution to be put to death upon a gibbet, and his family slain by the sword before the gates of Susa, as a most necessary sacrifice to divine justice.

"This is also farther to will and require you, that you forthwith despatch copies of these our letters throughout all our dominions, permitting the Jews to live in a peaceable enjoyment of their own laws, and that you give them your aid and assistance toward vindicating of themselves upon those that despitefully and injuriously oppressed them in their adversity.

"And whereas the precise time appointed for the utter extermination and destruction of these people was to have been upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, it is our pleasure that you pitch upon the same month and day for the work of their deliverance, as a circumstance the most agreeable to the methods of God's power and justice, not doubting but that his way of proceeding will be much to the satisfaction of all our friends, and the example of it stand upon record to posterity, for a monumental caution to all traitors for the time to come.

"And be it also known to all our cities, towns, and people, herein concerned, that what person soever shall presume, either by disobedience, or neglect, to act any ways contrary to the tenor of this our royal command, he shall be liable to military execution by fire and sword, whereof all our subjects are to take warning, and the Jews to be in readiness at the time assigned, to do themselves right upon their enemies."

Messengers were immediately despatched with these letters to all quarters. decai, in the mean time, coming forth out of the palace, dressed in royal robes, with a crown and golden chain, the Jews soon interpreted his appearance into a common blessing to them all; and the publication of the king's letter throughout all the towns and cities of his dominions, diffused such a universal joy among them, that a grateful complacency appeared in every countenance; nay, and this grace of the king had so powerful an influence and effect, even upon other nations, that many of them circumcised themselves, in hopes they might escape, under the disguise of Jews, who were highly elevated by the king's assigning them the same day for their revenge that had been designed for their execution, that is to say, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which the Hebrews call Adar, and the Macedonians, Dystrus.

Upon the obtaining of this mandate, the princes, governors, magistrates, and lieutenants, all paid a more than ordinary reverence to the Jews, for fear of the power of Mordecai.

Upon the publishing of this edict, the Jews put five hundred of their enemies to the sword at Susa, and the king showed the queen the number of them; but there was no account taken of those that were slain elsewhere; so he proposed it to her, if she would require any thing more, for he was resolved to deny her nothing.

Her request was then, that the Jews might have one day's revenge more upon their enemies; and that the ten sons of Haman might be hanged upon the gallows,* which the king also granted for the day following, without the least hesitation; so that they gathered in troops together upon the fourteenth, and killed near three hundred more of their adversaries, without so much as touching any of their goods; but in other places, up and down the empire, they destroyed seventy-five thousand of those whom they reputed to be their enemies.

This slaughter was made upon the thirteenth, and the day following they kept as a festival; and also at Susa they celebrated the fourteenth of the following month in a similar manner.

Mordecai, upon this, sent his orders to all the Jews, under the dominion of Artaxerxes, requiring them to observe those days as festivals; and to transmit the observance of them to posterity, and thereby perpetuate its memory; as it was but reasonable to celebrate their deliverance by a solemnity of rejoicing upon the same day that was by the treachery of Haman appointed for the massacre, and to make it a day of thanksgiving, in memory, as well of their being freed from their enemies, as of having them given up entirely and securely into their hands.

^{*} We are already told that these ten sons were slain by the sword, but the reason why Esther appears to be so solicitous to have their dead bodies hung upon the gallows, might be because they had shown more malice and indignation against the Jews, and on the day when the cruel edict came to take place, had made more desperate attacks upon them than any; though the reason of state in this severity, was doubtless to expose the family of Haman to greater infamy, and to deter other counsellors from abusing the king by false misrepresentations. The Jews indeed suffered none to hang on the tree (as they called the gallows) longer than till the evening of the day whereon they were executed; but other nations let them hang until they were consumed by crows, vultures, or other ravenous creatures, as appears from the story of the Gibeonites, (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.) and from that vulgar saying among the Romans, 'Pascere in cruce corvos.'

[†] These days were long after this observed by the Jews with the same solemnity, regaling one another by way of compliment, with some present of portion of the entertainment.

are observed which they call Purim or his administration, being near his person, lots; that is to say, the feast of lots.*

* The feast of Purim, or lots, is, to this very day, celebrated by the Jews, with some peculiar ceremonies; but most of them reduceable to these three things, reading, resting, and feasting. Before the reading, which is performed in the synagogue, and begins in the evening as soon as the stars appear, they make use of three forms of prayer; in the first of these, they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this divine service; in the second, they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors; and in the third, they bless his holy name for having continued their lives to the celebration of another festival in commemoration of it. Then they read over the whole history of Haman from the beginning to the end, but not out of any printed book, (for that is not lawful,) but out of an Hebrew manuscript, written on parchment. There are five places in the text, wherein the reader raises his voice with all his might: when he comes to the place that mentions the names of the ten sons of Haman. he repeats them very quick, to show that they were all destroyed in a moment; and every time that the name of Haman is pronounced, the children with great fury strike against the benches of the synagogues, with the mallets that they bring for that purpose. After that the reading is finished, they return home and have a supper, not of flesh, but of spoonmeat; and early next morning they arise and return to the synagogue; where, after they have read that passage in Exodus which makes mention of the war of Amalek, they begin again to read the book of Esther with the same ceremonies as before; and so conclude the service of the day, with curses against Haman and his wife Zeresh, with blessings upon Mordecai and Esther, and with praises to God for preserving his people. resting on this day is observed so religiously, that they will not so much as set, or sow any thing in their gardens, with full persuasion that it would not come up if they did; and therefore, they either play at chess and such like games, or spend the time in music and dancing, until it be proper to begin their feasting, wherein they indulge themselves to such an immoderate degree, that their feast of Purim has, with great justice, been called the Bacchanals of the Jews. They allow them-selves to drink wine to excess, nay, even to such a pitch as not to be able to distinguish between the blessing of Mordecai, and the curse of Haman, as themselves speak; and amidst the other sports and diversions of the day, they used formerly to erect a gibbet, and burn upon it a man made of straw, whom they called Haman; but herein it was thought that they might have a design to insult Christians, upon the death of our crucified Saviour, and therefore, Theodosius the II. (Anno Dom. 408.) forbade them to use this ceremony, under the penalty of forfeiting all their privileges. We have only farther to remark concerning this festival, that it is always kept for two days together, and the reason hereof is this :- the Jews at | Connection.

Upon this account it is, that those days power with the king, both in respect of and as an assistant and companion to the Mordecai was now a man of great queen; so that the affairs of the Jews were, by their means, better than they could ever have hoped for.

CHAPTER VII.

Artaxerxes favours the cause of the Jews-Nehemiah superintends the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem,

In the beginning of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, Ezra, (a priest descended from Seraiah, the high-priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem,) a man of great learning, and excellently skilled in the knowledge of the scriptures, who had hitherto continued in Babylon, with others of the captivity, obtained a very ample commission+ from the king to go to Jeru-

Shushan had two days allowed them to revenge themselves of their enemies, Esther ix. 13. but the rest of the Jews for other nations had but one. This caused, at first, some difference in their time of teasting; for the Jews, in all other parts of the kingdom, having done execution on their enemies on the thirteenth day, kept their rejoicing feast on the fourteenth; but the Jews at Shushan, being engaged in this work both on the thirteenth and fourteenth days, kept their festival for their deliverance on the fifteenth. When Mordecai, however, had made a record of this great deliverance, he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the dominions of Ahasuerus, to establish it as a standing ordinance among them, that they should keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar every year, as the days whereon the Jews rested from their enemies: and this is the reason why the festival continues for two days, though the former of them is only kept with great solemnity .- Patrick's Commentary, Howell's History in the notes, and Calmet's Dictionary.

† It can hardly be imagined, but that some more than ordinary means were used to obtain so great a favour from the king, as this commission was; and therefore we may suppose, that it was granted at the solicitation of Esther, who was become the best beloved of the king's concubines, though not as yet advanced to the dignity of queen: for, it being usual for the kings of Persia, on some particular days and occasions, to allow their women to ask what boons they pleased, it is not unlikely, that, by the direction of Mordecai, upon some such time and occasion as this, Esther (though she had not discovered her kindred and nation) might make this the matter of her request .- Prideaux's

salem, and to take as many of his own | nation with him as were willing to accompany him thither. The purport of the commission runs thus:- "Whereas it is decreed by me and my seven counsellors, that what Israelites soever within my dominions, with their priests and Levites, shall think fit to bear you company to Jerusalem, I have granted them free leave to go to Judea, to worship according to the laws of their country; and likewise to take along with them all the gold and silver that your people throughout Babylon shall contribute toward that service, for the buying of sacrifices to offer upon the altar to your God, and for making such vessels of gold and silver as you and your brethren shall judge meet. It is also my desire, that what is thus given you be dedicated to your God. And if you should have occasion for any thing else, use your own discretion, and supply yourself out of the public treasure; to which end I have already written to the officers that have the custody of it, in Syria and Phœnice, expressly commanding them to furnish whatsoever Ezra the priest and reader of the law of God shall desire, without any delay. And to the end that God may prosper both me and mine, I will have an hundred cores of wheat dedicated to God, according to the provision of the law. And I do strictly charge and require of the magistrates, that they exact nothing from the priests, or Levites, holy singers, porters, or other offices of the temple; and that they lay no burdens upon them. And for yourself, Ezra, I do hereby give you full authority, according to the wisdom you have received from God, to constitute judges, that may see justice done to the people through Syria and Phœnice, that understand the law, and are conscientious in their duty. And at the same time, that no plea of ignorance may be urged for violating the law, do you instruct the ignorant, that all transgressors may be punished according to their demerit. Farewell."

Upon the receipt of this letter, Ezra worshipped God, and gave thanks, ascribing to his gracious providence all the benefits and favours he had received from the king, who served but as the instrument of communicating the divine blessings.

The Jews in Babylon were, upon this occasion, summoned to a general meeting, where the letter was read; then a copy of it was taken, and sent away to be communicated to all the Jews of Media; but Ezra kept the original himself.

This instance of the king's piety towards God, and of the respect and kindness he had for Ezra, was an agreeable surprise to the people, insomuch that great numbers of them packed up their effects, and hastened away to Babylon, with a full purpose to return to Jerusalem; but there were then another sort of Israelites, who, being accustomed to the place, and settled in their habitations, chose rather to continue where they were. This seems to be the reason that there were two tribes to be found in Asia and Europe, under the Roman emperor.

As for the other ten tribes, they were all planted beyond the Euphrates, and so prodigiously increased that their number was scarcely to be computed.

The publication of this recommendatory testimonial brought over multitudes to Ezra, not only priests and Levites, but temple porters, singers, and other officers and servants.

Ezra appointed those that were disposed to return out of captivity, a rendezvous at the river Ahava,* where, after

^{*} This was a river of Assyria, and very probably, that which ran along the Adiabene, where the river Diava, or Adiava, is known to be, and upon which Ptolemy places the city of Abane, or Aavane. Here some imagine was the country which in the second Book of Kings, xvii. 24. is called Ava, from whence the king of Assyria translated the people called Avites, into Palestine, and, in their room, settled some of the captive Israelites. It was a common thing for those that travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to avoid the scorching heat of the desert of Ambia, to shape their course northward at first, and then, turning

three days' fast,* and the solemnity of offering vows and prayers for a safe and prosperous voyage, they entered on their journey on the twelfth day of the first month, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and got to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the same year, where Ezra immediately delivered out the money he brought, to the priests that had the custody of the holy treasure; six hundred and fifty talents of silver, a hundred talents of silver vessels, twenty talents of vessels of gold, and twelve talents of fine brass, that was even more precious than gold itself.

These were the bounties of the king and his friends, and of the Israelites that continued in Babylon.

When Ezra had acquitted himself of this trust, he offered unto God burntofferings, according to the direction of the law, twelve bulls for the whole people of Israel, seventy-two sheep and lambs, and twelve goats for a sin-offering.

He delivered also the king's letter to the stewards and governors of Phoenice and Coelo-syria, who held the Israelites in great esteem, and readily supplied

to westward, to pass through Syria into Palestine; but Ezra had a farther reason for his taking this rout: for, as he intended to get together as many Israelites as he could, to carry along with him to Jerusalem, he took his course this way, and made a halt in the country of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send emissaries into the Caspian mountains, to invite such Jews as were there to come and join him.—Le Clerc's Commentary,

them with whatever they wanted, whose undertaking and counsel, in every respect, seemed to have been distinguished by peculiar tokens of the divine blessing.

Having composed and regulated their affairs, Ezra received information that some of the priests and Levites had departed from the law and their duty, by marrying into foreign families, and thereby confounding the sacerdotal race.

Application was therefore made to him, that he would assert the observation of the laws, lest God, in his wrath for the iniquity of a few, should avenge himself upon the whole body of the people.

Ezra, upon this complaint, rent his clothes for very grief, tearing the hair from his head and beard, and casting himself upon the ground in despair; for there were so many great men concerned in this crime, that he thought it would be to no purpose to lay any injunction upon them to part with their wives and children, so that he continued still desponding, with his face upon the earth.

However, all the people that retained any reverence for the laws of God and their country, gathered together about him, to condole with him, and to sympathize in his sorrows.

Ezra, in the mean time, holding up his hands, said, "Thou, O God, knowest I am ashamed to lift up my eyes to heaven on the behalf of these people, when I consider, that after all the dreadful judgments upon their ancestors for their disobedience, they do yet go on in the steps of their forefathers. But, Lord, thy mercy is infinite; wherefore have pity, I beseech thee, upon this miserable remnant of thy distressed servants. And as thou hast been graciously pleased to bring them home again, perfect the work of thy redemption, in the pardon of their present transgression. It is confessed, that they deserve to die for their iniquity; but their trust is in thy goodness."

While the pious priest was addressing the throne of divine grace in behalf of his

and Calmet's Dictionary.

* This they had the greater reason to do, because they carried things of considerable value along with them; were apprehensive of enemies that lay in wait for them; and were ashamed to ask any guard of the king, who, being not much instructed in divine matters, might possibly think, that what they said of God's favour towards them, and the prophecies concerning their restoration, were but vain boasts, in case they should seem to distrust his power and favour, (of whom they had spoken so magnificently,) by making application to the king for his protection and defence. Rather therefore than give any such umbrage, they were resolved to commit themselves entirely to God: but then it was necessary, that they should be seech that of him, which, without giving offence, they could not request of the king.—Patrick's Commentary.

nation and people, amidst a throng of men, women, and children, there came to him one Shechaqiah, a man of quality in Jerusalem, who made a public confession and declaration of the sin they were all guilty of, that, contrary to the law, they had married strange women, and advised him to impose an oath upon all that had so done, to turn away all their wives and

Ezra approved the counsel, and took an oath of the chief priests and Levites, and of all Israel, to obey the proposed decree.

the children they had by them, and en-

join a severe punishment on those that

should refuse to submit to that decree.

After this transaction, he went from the temple to the chamber of Johanan, the son of Eliashib, where he spent that whole day without eating any thing, through the great anxiety of his mind.

He then commanded, by proclamation, all those people that were returned out of captivity, to meet at Jerusalem in two or three days; and in case of any failure, either through neglect or contempt, annexed, as a penalty, excommunication, and confiscation of their goods to the holy treasure.

Within three days the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin assembled, on the twentieth day of the ninth month, which the Hebrews call Thebeth, and the Macedonians Apelleius. And when they had placed themselves in the upper part of the temple, the elders being there present, Ezra stood up and informed them, saying, "That whereas they were all guilty of a grievous sin, who in contempt of their country's laws had entered into marriage with strangers, they had no way to recover God's favour, and to secure themselves from his vengeance, but by utterly casting off the women they had so taken."

After this declaration of Ezra, they unanimously signified their approbation of his counsel, and readiness to comply with it; but the number being very great, the season extremely cold, and the business of great importance, they looked upon it as a thing that required time and consideration to accomplish: so that upon this reflection it was proposed that a commission of inquiry might be issued out to a select number of eminent men and elders, who were free from the general charge.

This motion was unanimously received and approved, and upon the first day of the tenth month they entered upon the inquiry, which continued till the first day of the month following. Upon the scrutiny, they found great numbers of the relations of Jeshua, the high priest, as well as of other priests and Levites, and the rest of the Israelites, who, being in the common transgression, joined immediately in the abandoning their wives and children, preferring the solemn injunction of obedience to the laws of God to all the ties of paternal affection.

In the seventh month was the feast of tabernacles, and almost the whole multitude of the Israelites were now met together upon the occasion, in that part of the temple which looks towards the east, where Ezra at their request read the law of God unto them as he stood in the middle of the crowd.

This lecture continued from morning to mid-day, to the great edification of all the hearers; for they were thereby not only given to understand the rules and measures of truth and righteousness, present and future; but their thoughts were also carried back to reflections upon things past, by a recital of the calamities that their forefathers had endured, only for the violation of those laws, in the observance whereof they might have been secure and happy.

This consideration drew tears from their eyes; and Ezra, observing the pious effect it had upon their minds, bade them go home, and set their hearts at rest, for it was a kind of profanation of the holy solemnity to weep upon a festival; where-

fore he advised them to be rather free and merry, and to eat, drink, and rejoice, in honour of the day, exhorting them not to make their repentance a mortification any further than to secure them for the future from a relapse into the same errors.

| Xexxes. As he was walking one day before Susa, the capital of Persia, he happened to hear some travellers that had come a long journey together into the city, talking Hebrew one to another. Upon which occasion he asked them from what quarter

The people were willing therefore to follow his counsel, and celebrated the feast as they ought to do; so that after eight days spent in mirth and feasting, they returned every man to his own habitation, but not without thankful acknowledgments to Ezra for the reformation he had wrought in the government.

By this meritorious service he gained infinitely upon the hearts and affections of the people, so that he lived with honour, and died at Jerusalem in an advanced age, where he had also a most magnificent burial.*

Jehoiakim, the high-priest, died also about the same time, and Eliashim his son succeeded him.

There was among the Jewish captives a certain person, whose name was Nehemiah,† the butler or cupbearer to Arta-

* The great business effected by Ezra was his collecting and setting forth a correct edition of the holy scriptures, in which he laboured much, and which he brought to considerable perfection. Of this, both Jews and Christians allow him the honour. The principal services, which he performed in this important work, were these: 1. He corrected all the errors which had crept into these copies, through the negligence or mistakes of transcribers. 2. He collected together all the body servictures then except the books of which the holy scriptures then consisted, and disposed them in their proper order, thus settling the canon of scripture. 3. He added in several places throughout the books of this edition, what appeared necessary for their illustration, connexion, or completion, in which he was assisted by the same Spirit by which they were at first written. 4. He changed the old names of several places, that were grown out of use, putting in their stead the new names by which the places were then known, that the people might the better un-derstand them. In conducting this great work, and in restoring the observance of the Jewish law according to the ancient usages before the captivity, he had the assistance of the principal elders who lived in his time: but the main conduct of the work, and the glory of accomplishing it, was by the Jews chiefly attributed to him, under whose presidency, as they inform us, it was done .- Dean Prideaux.

+ We are nowhere told of what tribe or family

xerxes. As he was walking one day before Susa, the capital of Persia, he happened to hear some travellers that had come a long journey together into the city, talking Hebrew one to another. Upon which occasion he asked them from what quarter they came? As they answered, from Judea, he proceeded to divers other questions concerning the Jews, and the state of their city. They informed him, that affairs were in a bad situation; that their walls were pulled down, and their country laid open to the outrages and incursions of their malicious neighbours; themselves carried away into captivity, and the highways strewed with dead bodies.

Nehemiah could not forbear weeping at this deplorable state of his countrymen and kindred, and with his eyes toward heaven, he cried out to almighty God: "Lord, how long wilt thou suffer thy people to be trampled upon, and exposed as a prey to mankind!"

While Nehemiah was at the gate, and in the middle of his lamentations, one of the attendants brought him word that the king was ready to go to supper; so that he hastened away in confusion and disorder to his duty.

The king, after supper, being somewhat more cheerful than usual, and observing a heaviness of countenance in Nehemiah, inquired the cause. "Alas! Sir," says Nehemiah after a short ejaculatory prayer that God would give energy and persuasion to his words, "how is it possible for me to be otherwise than overwhelmed with grief and heaviness of heart, when the walls of Jerusalem are made a heap of rubbish, and the gates consumed by fire. Now, Sir, I have to request the favour

Nehemiah was. His father Hachaliah seems to have been one of those Jews who, having obtained a good settlement in the land of their captivity, ciose rather to remain there than to return to their own country when leave was given. It is probable that he was an inhabitant of the city of Shushan, which circumstance gave him the opportunity of procuring the advancement of his son to the office of king's cupbearer.

a journey to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, to help forward the rebuilding of it."

The king granted his petition, and promised him recommendatory letters to the governors, through whose provinces he was to pass, with orders to treat him with all manner of respect, and to supply him with whatever he wanted toward the work he was about. Wherefore the king encouraged him to set his heart at ease, and go on cheerfully in his service.

Upon this assurance Nehemiah revived, and blessed God and the king upon finding so gracious a disposition in his favour.

On the day following, the king sent for Nehemiah, and gave him letters of credit to Adeus, the governor of Syria, Phœnicia, and Samaria, with orders and instructions to receive and assist him, as he had promised.

He went first to Babylon, and from thence, with as many of his friends and companions as voluntarily offered themselves to bear him company, he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he arrived in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. And having first given his friends the sight of his credentials, he delivered them to Adeus and his colleagues, according to the address.

After this, he summoned a general meeting of the people to Jerusalem, and harangued them in the temple, after the following manner:

"You cannot but see and understand, ye men of Judea, that we are at this day under the power and providence of the same almighty and merciful God, that did so many great things for our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of a gracious regard to their piety and virtue; and it is by the favour of that God that I have now obtained leave from the king to enter upon the rebuilding of your walls, and the completing of the work of the temple, that is yet unfinished. But as you well know that the neighbour-

that I may have your royal leave to take ing nations are enemies to your undertaking, and will do all that is in their power to obstruct your design, when they once see you heartily intent upon the work, I therefore recommend it to you in the first place to take courage, and cast yourselves upon God, who will most certainly defeat all the practices of your enemies. secondly, that you apply to your business day and night, without intermission, this being the proper season for it."

> Upon this exhortation, Nehemiah immediately ordered the magistrates to survey the ground, and take measure of the walls; and according to that computation, to make an equal distribution of the work among the people, promising at the same time the assistance of himself, and of all that belonged to him, in the service; and with these words he dismissed the assembly.

> The authority of Nehemiah made such an impression upon the Jews,* that they immediately applied themselves to their business.

> The rumour of this enterprise was no sooner brought to the Ammonites, the Moabites, Samaritans, and the Cœlo-syrians, than they were inflamed with envy and resentment, and employed every method to counteract it. They also laid in wait for the Jews up and down in ambushes, and destroyed a great many of them by sur-They kept ruffians in pay to attempt the person of Nehemiah himself, and so alarmed the people with rumours of invasion, that the multitude, terrified thereat, were ready to desist from the undertaking. But Nehemiah firmly persevered, and under the security of a slender guard wrought on without weariness or apprehension of danger.

It was not for the sake of his own safety or from the fear of death that he made this provision; but he was well assured, that if he should be cut off, his

^{*} This was the first time that the people were ever called Jews, or their country Judea; and it was so called from the tribe of Judah, that were formerly possessed of that quarter.

countrymen would never finish the building. So he gave orders for the future, that all the carpenters, masons, and other labourers, should work with their swords by their side, and their bucklers within a convenient distance, in order to be ready upon occasion.

He appointed trumpeters also to be posted within five hundred feet one from another, and upon any appearance of an enemy, to give the alarm, that the people might have time to stand to their arms, without danger of a surprise.

He went every night the round of the city, being never discouraged about the work itself, nor about his own diet and sleep, for he made no use of those things for his pleasure, but out of necessity.

Upon the perfecting of the fortifications, which were completed in fifty-two days, Nehemiah and the people offered up their sacrifice, and continued together, for eight days, feasting and rejoicing, which was very unwelcome news to the Syrians, when they came to understand it.

Nehemiah, reflecting that the city at that time was thin of inhabitants, he persuaded all the priests and Levites thereabouts to take up their habitations in the city, and he would be at the charge of providing them houses.

He ordered likewise the people in the country, that followed husbandry, to carry their tithes into the city for the maintenance of the priests and Levites, that they might not be diverted by worldly cares from attending the duty of their office.

To this plan they readily agreed on all sides, by which means the city was, by degrees, better peopled.

After this, and many other actions, worthy of commendation, Nehemiah departed this life; and it may with justice be recorded of him, that he was a man of virtue and strict honour, of eminent bounty and extensive charity.*

brothers harboured the like design; and Ochus, to whom his father had left the government of Hyrcania, was the chief object of his suspicion. Accordingly he sent for him, with the intention of getting him murdered as soon as he arrived. However, Ochus, who saw through his design, delayed coming upon various pretences; which he continued till he advanced at the head of a strong army, which he openly declared he would employ to revenge the death of his brother Xernes. This declaration brought over to him a great number of the nobility, and several governors of the provinces, who were justly dissatisfied at Sogdi-anus's cruelty and ill conduct. They put the tiara, which was the mark of regal dignity, on Ochus's head, and proclaimed him king. Sogdianus, seeing himself abandoned in this manner, was as mean and cowardly in the slight defence he made to maintain his crown, as he had before been unjust and barbarous in usurping it. Con-trary to the advice of his best friends, and the wisest of those who still adhered to him, he concluded a treaty with his brother, who, getting him into his hands, caused him to be thrown into ashes, where he died a cruel death. This was a kind of punishment peculiar to the Persians, and exercised only on great criminals. One of the largest towers was filled to a certain height with ashes. The criminal then was thrown headlong from the top of the tower into them; after which, the ashes were by a wheel turned perpetually round him, till he was suffocated. Thus this wicked prince lost his life and empire, which he enjoyed only six months and fifteen days .- Rollin.

^{*} Artaxerxes died about the beginning of the forty-first year of his reign. Xerxes, who succeeded him, was the only son which the queen his wife brought him: but he had seventeen others by his concubines, among whom was Sogdianus, (who is called Secondianus by Ctesias,) Ochus, and Arsites. Sogdianus, in concert with Pharnacias, one of Xerxes's eunuchs, came insidiously, one festival day, to the new king, who, after drinking too immoderately, was retired to his chamber, in order to give the fumes of the wine he had drunk time to evaporate; where he killed him without any difficulty, after he had reigned but forty-five days; and was declared king in his stead. He Bagorazus, the most faithful of all his father's eunuchs. It was he who had been appointed to superintend the funeral obsequies of Artaxerxes, and of the queen, Xerxes's mother, who died the same day as her husband. After having deposited the two bodies in the mausoleum where the kings of Persia were interred, he found, at his return, Sogdianus on the throne, who did not receive him favourably, upon account of some difference with him during the lifetime of his father. But the new king did not stop here: not long after he took an opportunity to quarrel with him, on some trifling circumstance relating to the obsequies of his father, and caused him to be stoned. By these two murders, that of his brother Xerxes and of Bagorazus, he became the horror of the army and pobility, so that he did not think himself safe on a throne to which he had forced his way by such enormous crimes. He suspected that his

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK VIII.

FROM THE PONTIFICATE OF JOHN TO THE DEATH OF JUDAS MACCABEUS.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE history of the Jews, as related in the sacred oracles, terminates at this period; and the long interval from this time to the incarnation of our Saviour has been necessarily filled up from other sources. Jewish affairs, however, are so intimately connected with those of foreign nations, that the chain of their history is almost unbroken; and the great outlines, as well as many of the more minute incidents, not a few of which are of a painful nature, are left on record in the works of Philo Judæus, Josephus, the Apocryphal books, It is true the Apocryphal books have no title to be considered as inspired writings; nor are they to be received as oracles of faith, to sanctify opinions, or to determine religious controversies; -but, as a collection of very ancient Jewish works anterior to Christianity, as documents of history, and as lessons of prudence, and often of piety, they are highly deserving of notice. They are likewise valuable as occasionally illustrating the accomplishment of prophecy, and explaining the manners, sentiments, and history of the Jews. These books are all curious, and some of them extremely worthy of regard. to be regretted that their just rejection from the scriptural canon by the reform-

ed churches has occasioned the opposite extreme of an entire disregard to them in the minds of many serious and studious Christians, "The first book of Maccabees," says Horne, "is a most valuable historical monument, written with great accuracy and fidelity, on which more reliance may be placed than on the writings of Josephus, who has borrowed his materials from it, and has frequently mistaken its meaning." It contains a collection of historical particulars relative to the Jews from the beginning of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the year of the world 3829, to the death of Simon the high-priest, 3869. The author is by some thought to have been John Hyrcanus, the . son of Simon; who was a prince and highpriest of the Jews near thirty years. Josephus indeed informs us, that the highpriests were intrusted with the care of writing the annals of their country; and at the period of the Maccabees great attention seems to have been paid to preserve them. The writer, who was probably some person publicly appointed to digest the history, appears to have had recourse to the national records, and sometimes refers to them. In this period of our history the incidents are recorded as having happened under the pontificates of the high-priests. Among other events

his family, and of the wars which they at zealous for their religion, and such strict the head of their countrymen maintained observers of their oaths, whether of alleagainst the kings of Syria in the defence giance or confederacy, as to suffer the of their religion and laws. From the most bloody persecutions, and horrid butdeath of Alexander, who had conquered Persia and the countries dependent on that empire, Judea followed the fate of their laws. Syria: and for the space of one hundred and fifty years was exposed to all the ambitious contests which prevailed between the kings of Syria and Egypt. After various revolutions, and alternate subjugation to each of these kingdoms; and after having occasionally suffered all the oppressions and exactions that tyranny could enforce by means of the high-priests, and those princes who were appointed by the interest and subject to the control of the conquerors, Judea became a tributary province of Syria under Antiochus Epiphanes, and was cruelly harassed and pillaged by him. The severe persecution which he exercised, and his avowed designs, which tended to exterminate the religion, and indeed the whole nation of the Jews, inflamed the zeal of Mattathias to resentment and revolt; and upon his death excited Judas, in compliance with the dying injunctions of his father, to attempt the deliverance of his country. The successive victories and prudent conduct of Judas and his brethren, which effected the accomplishment of their designs, constitute a chief subject of the present book. The relation affords a lively picture of a nation inspired by the patriotic heroism of its leaders, and struggling with enthusiasm for civil and religious liberty; and if we except some apostasies occasioned by persecutions, or the ambition of some of their high-priests, we shall find them in the sequel more averse to idolatry, and to all heathenish superstitions, than eyer their forefathers had been prone to them before the captivity; such strict observers of the sabbath, as to suffer themselves to be murdered by whole armies, rather than violate it by

are related the history of Mattathias and standing on their defence; in a word, so cheries, with the utmost courage and constancy, rather than violate their fidelity to

CHAPTER I.

Jeshua is slain by John the high-priest .- Alexander the Great transfers the seat of war from Europe into Asia .- Breaks the Persian empire, but treats the Jews with amazing lenity, and many tokens of respect.

AFTER the death of Eliashib the high-priest, his son Judas, by hereditary right, succeeded to the office, and after his decease the pontificate devolved on his son John, who was the occasion of the violation and profanation of the temple afterward by Bagoses, commander-in-chief of the troops of Artaxerxes, and of imposing a tribute upon the Jews, obliging them to allow out of the public treasure, fifty drachmas per day for every lamb they sacrificed, * before

[.] This, if extended only to the ordinary sacrifices which were offered every day, amounted to 36,500 drachmas for the whole year, which is no more than one thousand one hundred and forty pounds, twelve shillings, and six-pence of our money: but, if it extended also to the extraordinary sacrifices, which on solemn days were added to the ordinary, it will come to about half as much more. For the ordinary sacrifices which were offered every day, and therefore called the daily sacrifices, were a lamb in the morning and another in the evening, which are called the morning and evening sacrifices; and these, in the whole year, came to seven hundred and thirty. But, besides these, there were added on every sabbath two lambs more, Numb. xxviii. 9, 10. on every new-moon seven, Numb. xxviii. 11. on each of the seven days of the paschal solemnity, seven, Numb. xxviii. 16 -24. besides one more on the second day, when the wave-sheaf was offered. Levit, xxiii. 12. on the day of Pentecost, seven, ver. 17, 18. on the Teast of trumpets, seven, Numb. xxviii. 27. on the great day of expiation, seven, chap. xxix. 8. on each of the seven days of the feast of tabernacles, fourteen, chap. xxix. 13. and on the eighth day seven, Numb. xxix. 36. so that the additional lambs being three hundred seventy and one, these, if reckoned to the other, make the whole number, annually offered at the morning and evening sacrifices.

which imposition was thus brought on.

John had a brother whose name was Jeshua; and Bagoses, being very much his friend, took upon him the advancing of Jeshua to the pontificate. Jeshua depended so much upon his assurance, that he took the liberty to enter into a dispute with his brother in the temple itself, upon this subject; and the contest proceeded so far, that his brother in a rage set upon him and killed him.

This was the greatest affront to religion that ever was committed, more especially by a priest; and for the farther aggravation of the scandal, it was beyond all precedent, either among the Greeks, or bar-But God would not suffer so audacious an affront to escape unpunished. For the people lost their liberty for it, and the Persians profaned the temple.

As soon as the news of it came to Bagoses, that the high-priest had spilt the blood of his brother in the very temple, he called out to the Jews in contempt and indignation, "Profane wretches, to make shambles of the place of your worship!" at the same time pressing to get into the temple; but being opposed in his passage, he said unto them, "What! do you look upon my living body to be fouler than the carcase that lies here within?" And with these words he forced his way.

Upon this occasion he kept a severe hand over the Jews for seven years. But

to be eleven hundred and one : and therefore, if the mulct of fifty drachmas a lamb were paid for them all, it would make the whole of it to amount to 55,050 drachmas, which comes to seventeen hundred and twenty-pounds, six shillings and three pence of our money. But even this sum being too small for a national mulct, it seems most probable, that all the lambs which were offered in the temple in any sacrifice, and upon any account whatever, were taken into the reckoning. We may observe, however, that whatever this mulct was, the payment of it lasted no longer than seven years; for on the death of Artaxerxes, the changes and revolutions, which then happened in the empire, made a change in the government of Syria, and he that succeeded Bagoses in that province, no far-ther exacted it.—Prideaux's Connection.

they entered upon their daily offerings, after the death of John, his son Jaddus came to the priesthood.

> This Jaddus had a brother, whose name was Manasseh, to whom Sanballat, understanding Jerusalem to be a famous city, and that the kings of it had put the Syrians and Assyrians to many difficulties, frankly gave his daughter Vicasa in marriage as a test and earnest of the amity . he propounded to himself with the Jews. This was that Sanballat that governed Samaria under the last Darius, a Cuthite born, from whence the Samaritans had their original.*

* If we believe their chronicle, (which they tell us is of great antiquity, though others who have examined it will not allow it to be as old as Constantine's days,) they give us an account of their origin quite different to what we gather from sa-cred writ. They pretend to be descended from cred writ. They pretend to be descended from Joseph by Ephraim, in a direct line; and that when Joshua entered into the promised land, he caused a temple to be built upon mount Gerizim. and appointed one Buz of the seed of Aaron to officiate as high-priest, from whom they have an exact genealogy, and uninterrupted succession ever since. They neither own Jeroboam's schism, nor the transmigration of the ten tribes, but give this account of their leaving their country, and returning to it again:—that when the kings of Jerusalem and Syria had revolted against Bachtnezzar, (so they call Nebuchadnezzar) he came with an army and took Jerusalem, and thence marching to the Shechemites (for that's the name they give themselves) ordered them to leave their country in seven days, upon pain of military execution, which they readily did: that when he sent Persians to inhabit the cities which they had left, they could not live there; because the fruits which seemed fair to the eye were tainted with poison, and so destroyed them: that upon complaints of this, the king consulted with some of the ancient inhabitants of these provinces, who informed him, that the only remedy was to send the Hebrews back again into their own country, which when he consented to, a place was appointed for their general rendezvous: that when they came to this place, a dispute arose between them, whether they should go and rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, or that of Gerizim, and when Zerubbabel was for the for-mer, and Sanballat for the latter, each pleading the sanction of the Pentateuch, and each pretending that the copy of his opponent was corrupt, they resolved to end the controversy by a fiery trial: that Zerubbabel's copy being thrown into the fire was immediately consumed, but then, Sanballat's endured the flames three times together, and received no manner of harm; whereupon the king honoured the Shechemites with rich presents, and sent Sanballat at the head of the ten tribes to take possession of mount Gerizim. But who sees not that this whole history (full of falsities

sanias, in the city of Ægea;* Alexander

and absurdities as it is) was only invented to wipe off the shame and disgrace of the Samaritans, for being the offspring of proselytes and a medley of foreign nations?—Basnage's History of the Jews,

and Universal History.

* The day after the nuptials of Cleopatra, Philip's daughter, with Alexander, king of Epirus, games and shows were solemnized. As these formed part of the religious worship, there were carried in it, with great pomp and ceremony, twelve sta-tues of the gods, carved with inimitable art. A thirteenth, that surpassed them all in magnificence, was that of Philip, which represented him as a god. The hour for his leaving the palace being arrived, he went forth in a white robe; and advanced with a majestic air, in the midst of acclamations, towards the theatre, where an infinite multitude of Macedonians, as well as foreigners, waited his coming with impatience. His guards marched before and behind him, leaving, by his order, a considerable space between themselves and him, to give the spectators a better opportunity of surveying him; and also to show that he considered the affection which the Grecians bore him as his safest guard. But all the festivity and pomp of these nuptials ended in the murder of Philip; and it was his refusal to do an act of justice that occasioned his death. Some time before, Attalus, inflamed with wine at an entertainment. had insulted, in the most shocking manner, Paucanias, a young Macedonian nobleman. The latter had long endeavoured to revenge the cruel affront, and was perpetually imploring the king to interpose his power. But Philip, unwilling to disgust Attalus, uncle to Cleopatra, whom he had married after having divorced Olympias, his first queen, would never listen to Pausanias's complaints. However, to console him in some measure, and to express the high esteem and the great confidence he reposed in him, he made him one of the chief officers of his life-guard. But this was not what the young Macedonian required, whose anger now swelling to fury directs itself against his judge, and he forms the design of wiping out his shame, by imbruing his hands in a most horrid murder. When once a man is determined to die, he is vastly strong and formidable. Pausanias, the better to put his bloody design into execution, chose the instant of that pompous ceremony, when the eyes of the whole multitude were fixed on the prince; doubtless to make his vengeance more conspicuous, and proportion it to the greatness of the injury which he had received, and for which he conceived he had a right to make the king responsible, as he had long solicited that prince in vain for the satisfaction due to him. Seeing him therefore alone, in the space which his guards left round him, he advances forwards, stabs him with a dagger, and lays him dead at his feet. Diodorus observes, that he was assassinated the very instant his statue entered the theatre. The assassin had prepared horses ready for his escape, and would have got off, had not an acci-

Philip king of Macedon being treach- his son succeeded to the government, and erously murdered about this time, by Pau- crossing the Hellespont, gave Darius a total overthrow at the river Granicus.+ After which he subdued Lydia and Ionia. and passing his army through Caria, he entered into Pamphylia.

The elders of Jerusalem were at this time very much dissatisfied with the brother of Jaddua, the high-priest, for taking to wife a strange woman, insomuch that the disgust had almost occasioned a tumult, as it looked like a step toward the abolition of their country's laws about marriages; because, if they had suffered it to go on, it would by degrees become a custom. Nor had they forgotten that this very thing was the cause of their former captivity, and of all the calamities that had ensued upon it; that is, the transgression that drew those judgments upon them, was the marrying of women that were not of their own extraction; and therefore they positively required, that Manasseh should either dismiss his wife, or serve no more at the altar.

But the high-priest and the people, being moved with indignation, after this, would not suffer Manasseh to officiate at the altar; whereupon he sent to Sanballat, his father-in-law, with a profession of the great affection he had for his daughter; but assured him at the same time, that he could not submit to lose his priesthood, and the honour that was annexed to his family, as the highest of all others in esteem among the Jews, for the sake of a wife, though never so excellent.

Sanballat told him, that he would undertake not only to secure him the exer-

dent happened which stopped him, and gave the pursuers time to overtake him. Pausanias was immediately crt to pieces upon the spot .- Rollin.

[†] The Granicus is a narrow, deep, and rapid stream, originating in the northern slope of the range of Ida, and running a north-east course of forty geographical miles to the Propontis. Its western banks are reported by travellers to be high, steep, and rugged. This river is famous for the defeat of Darius there with an army of 110,000 or as some say, 600,000 Persians, by Alexander with 35,000 Macedonians.

cise of the function, but advance him to | necessary preparations, with a resolution the pontificate, and establish him prince of the whole country, upon condition of owning his daughter for his wife, and that he would build a temple for him upon mount Gerizim, that overlooked Samaria and the rest of the mountains thereabouts, not inferior to that of Jerusalem. this he took upon him to see it effected by the consent of Darius.

Manasseh depended so absolutely upon this assurance, that he made no doubt at all of the performance, and so continued with his father.

Sanballat was now advanced in years, and finding many priests and Israelites entangled in such matches, the state of Jerusalem was much troubled at it: for all those irregular people went over to Manasseh, Sanballat furnishing them with money, houses, land and stock, to maintain the ambition of his son-in-law.

Upon the news of Alexander's passing the Hellespont, and the famous victory he had obtained at the river Granicus, Darius, to prevent his farther progress, assembled all the troops he could levy, to obstruct his passage, with a resolution to give the Macedonians battle before they should overrun the whole of Asia, which they intended to do; so that having passed the Euphrates with his army, and also Taurus,* a mountain in Cilicia, he made

* Taurus is the largest mountain of Asia as to extent. One of its extremities is in Caria, and it extends not only as far as the most eastern extremities of Asia, but it also branches in several parts, and runs far in the north. It approaches so near to the Mediterranean as in some places to leave only narrow passes. It is in many places very rugged, and covered with vast pine forests. In summer it is traversed by Turcoman shepherds, who in winter descend and take up their residence in the towns. This mountain was well known by several names, particularly in different countries. In Cilicia, where it reaches as far as the Euphrates, it is called Taurus.—Cilicia is a country of Asia Minor, on the sea-coast, at the north of Cyprus, the south of mount Taurus, and the west of the Euphrates. The inhabitants en-

to fight the enemy.

Sanballat was not a little comforted with this advance of Darius; and in a full confidence of success, told Manasseh, that every thing should be made good that he had promised him, as soon as the king should return; for he was fully persuaded, (and all the Asiatics were of his opinion too,) that the Macedonians, with their handful of men, would never stand the first shock. But in the event they found their mistake; for upon the armies joining, Darius was totally routed, a great part of his army lost, his mother, wife, and children, made prisoners, and himself forced to fly into Persia.+

Alexander, in the mean time, marched into Syria, took Damascus and Sidon, t

the Roman emperors; but was reduced into a province by Vespasian. It received its name from

Cilix, the son of Agenor.—See Lempriere.

† Darius's consort was the most lovely princess in the world, as Darius himself was the most beautiful of princes, and of a very tall and most majestic shape; and the princesses their daughters resembled them. They were, says Plutarch, in Alexander's camp, not as in that of an enemy, but as in a sacred temple, and a sanctuary assigned for the asylum of chastity and modesty, in which all the princesses lived so retired, that they were not seen by any person, nor did any one dare to ap-proach their apartments. He treated these prin-cesses with such humanity, that nothing but the remembrance that they were captives, could have made them sensible of their calamity; and of al. the advantages they possessed before, nothing was wanting with regard to Alexander, but that trust and confidence, which no one can repose in an enemy, how kindly soever he behaves .- Rollin.

Sidon, or Zidon, was a celebrated city of Palestine, reputed to have been founded by Sidon the eldest son of Canaan, from whom, according to Josephus, it derives its name; but other authorities derive the name Sidon from the Hebrew or Syrian word אַרָּדר, which signifies fishing. If the primitive founder was a fisherman, the two accounts may be easily reconciled. Joshua calls it Sidon the Great, by way of eminence; whence some have taken occasion to say, that in his time there were two Sidons, a greater and a lesser: but no geographer has mentioned any other Sidon than Sidon the Great. It is situated on the Mediterranean, one day's journey from Paneas, or from the fountains of Jordan, in a fine level tract of land, the remarkably simple air of which suits with riched themselves by piratical plunder till they were conquered by Pompey. The country was opulent, and governed by kings, under some of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,—with the Syroand laid siege to Tyre, writing to the highpriest of the Jews, that he expected the same assistances from them which they before had allowed to Darius; and that they should provide a market for the supply of his army, where he might have necessaries for his money, assuring them that they should have no reason to repent the respect.

The answer the high-priest returned was briefly this, that they had bound themselves by an oath to Darius, never to bear arms against him; and that they were tied

up by that obligation for life.

Alexander was highly incensed at this reply, but went on with the siege of Tyre,*

Phœnician woman. Abulfeda places it sixty-six miles from Damascus. This city has been always famous for its great trade and navigation. Its inhabitants were the first remarkable merchants in the world, and were very early celebrated on ac-count of their luxury; for, in the days of the judges of Israel, the inhabitants of Laish are said to have dwelt careless and secure after the manner of the Zidonians. The men of Sidon being great shipwrights, were particularly eminent, above all other nations, for hewing and polishing timber, there being 'none who were skilled how to hew timber like the Sidonians.' This place is now called Seide or Saide: its port is small, and nearly filled up with the accumulation of mud. city, as it exists at present, rises immediately from the strand; and, when seen from a slight distance, presents a rather imposing appearance. The in-terior, however, is most wretched and gloomy. "About half-way between Saide (or Sidon) and Tsour (or Tyre)," Jowett informs us, "are very extensive ruins of towns which once connected these two cities; but of these ruins there is now scarcely one stone left upon another They consist chiefly of lines which show, rased even with the soil, the foundation of houses-many stones irregularly scattered-a few cisterns with half defaced sculpture on them; and, at a considerable distance from the path, there are at one spot several low columns either mutilated or considerably sunk in the earth. These reliques show, what it needed no such evidence to prove, that in peaceable and flourishing times, on this road between two such considerable cities as Tyre and Sidon, there must have been many smaller towns for business, pleasure, and agriculture, delightfully situated by the sea-side; but peaceful security has long been a blessing unknown to these regions; and we may apply to them the language of Judges v. 7 .- 'The villages ceased; they ceased in Israel.'"

 This celebrated city and sea-port of Phœnicia was twofold, insular and continental. Insular Tyre was certainly the most ancient, for it was noticed by Joshua: the continental city, however,

and laid siege to Tyre, writing to the highpriest of the Jews, that he expected the same assistances from them which they before had allowed to Darius; and that

> as being more commodiously situated, first grew into consideration, and assumed the name of Palætyrus, or Old Tyre. Insular Tyre was confined to a small rocky island eight hundred paces long and four hundred broad, and could never exceed two miles in circumference. But Tyre, on the opposite coast about half a mile from the sea, was a city of vast extent, since, many centuries after its de-molition by Nebuchadnezzar, the scattered ruins measured nineteen miles round, as we learn from Pliny and Strabo. Of these the most curious and surprising are, the cisterns of Ras-el-Ain, designed to supply the city with water; of which there are three still entire, about one or two furlongs from the sea; so well described by Maundrell, for their curious construction and solid masonry. "The fountains of these waters," says he, after the description, "are as unknown as the contriver of them. According to common tradition, they are filled from a subterraneous river, which king Solomon discovered by his great sagacity; and he caused these cisterns to be made as part of his recompence to king Hiram, for the materials furnished by that prince towards building the temple at Jerusalem. It is certain, however, from their rising so high above the level of the ground, that they must be brought from some part of the mountains, which are about a league distant; and it is as certain that the work was well done at first; seeing it performs the office so well, at so great a distance of time; the Turks having broken an outlet on the west side of the cistern, through which there issues a stream like a brook, driving four corn mills between it and the sea." these cisterns there was an aqueduct which led to the city, supported by arches, about six yards from the ground, running in a northerly direction, about an hour, when it turns to the west, at a small mount, where anciently stood a fort, but now a mosque, which seems to ascertain the site of the old city; and thence proceeds over the isthmus that connects Insular Tyre with the main, built by Alexander, when he besieged and took it. Old Tyre withstood the mighty Assyrian power, having been besieged in vain, by Shalmaneser, for five years, although he cut off their supplies of water from the cisterns, which they remedied by digging wells within the city. It afterwards held out for thirteen years against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and was at length taken; but not until the Tyrians had removed their effects to the insular town, and left nothing but the bare walls to the victor, which he demolished. What completed the destruction of the city was, that Alexander afterwards made use of these materials to build a prodigious causeway, or isthmus, above half a mile long, to the insular city, which revived, as the phœnix, from the ashes of the old, and grew to great power and opulence, as a maritime state; and which he stormed after a most obstinate siege of five months. Bp. Pococke observes, that "there are no signs of the ancient city; and as it is a

were to be broken or kept. Alexander, who Gaza, a city in Palestine of which one of was indefatigable, took Tyre by assault; *

sandy shore, the face of every thing is altered, and the great aqueduct is in many parts almost buried in the sand." The fate of lusular Tyre has been no less remarkable. It received a great blow from Alexander, not only by his taking and burning the city, but much more by his building of Alexandria in Egypt, which in time deprived it of much of its trade, and thus effectuated more rapidly its ruin. It had the misfortune afterwards of changing its masters often, being sometimes in the hands of the Ptolemies, kings of Egypt, and sometimes of the Seleucidæ, kings of Syria, till at length it fell under the dominion of the Romans. It was taken by the Saracens about the year of Christ 639, in the reign of Omar their third emperor. It was retaken by the Christians during the time of the holy war, in the year 1124, Baldwin, the second of that name, being then king of Jerusalem, and assisted by a fleet of the Venetians. From the Christians it was taken again, in the year 1289, by the Mame-lukes of Egypt, under their Sultan Alphix, who sacked and rased this and Sidon, and other strong towns, in order that they might never afford any harbour or shelter to the Christians. From the Mamelukes it was again taken in the year 1516, by Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks; and under their dominion it continues at present. But, alas, how fallen, how changed from what it was formerly! For, from being the centre of trade, frequented by all the merchant ships of the east and west, it is now become a heap of ruins, visited only by the boats of a few poor fishermen.

How utterly this once flourishing city is now destroyed, agreeably to the divine predictions, every traveller attests who has visited its site. We select two or three of the most striking. Dr Shaw, who travelled in the former part of the last century, says, "I visited several creeks and inlets, in order to discover what provision there might have been formerly made for the security of their vessels. Yet notwithstanding that Tyre was the chief maritime power of this country, I could not observe the least token of either cothon or harbour that could have been of any extraordinary capacity. The coasting ships, indeed, still find a tolerably good shelter from the northern winds under the southern shore, but are obliged immediately to retire, when the winds change to the west or south: so that there must have been some better station than this for their security and reception. In the N. N. E. part likewise of the city, we see the traces of a safe and commodious basin, lying within the walls; but which at the same time is very small, scarce forty yards in diameter. Neither could it ever have enjoyed a larger area, unless the buildings which now circumscribe it were encroachments upon its original dimensions. this port, small as it is at present, is notwithstanding so choked up with sand and rubbish, that the boats of those poor fishermen, who now and then visit this once renowned emporium, can with great difficulty only be admitted." "This city," says Maundrell, who travelled nearly about the same time, "standing in the sea upon a peninsula, pro-

give all people to understand, how far oaths from whence he proceeded to besiege Darius's eunuchs, named Betis, was the

> mises at a distance something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory, for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes, chap. xxvi, xxvii, xxviii. On the north side it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which you see nothing here, but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left: its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. that 'it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.'" "Of this once powerful mistress of the ocean," Mr Jolliffe, informs us, "there now exist scarcely any traces. Some miserable cabins, ranged in irregular lines, dignified with the name of streets, and a few buildings of a rather better description, occupied by the officers of government, compose nearly the whole of the town. It still makes, indeed, some languishing efforts at commerce, and contrives to export annually to Alexandria cargoes of silk and tabacco, but the amount merits no consideration. - The noble dust of Alexander, traced by the imagination till found stopping a beer-barrel,' would scarcely afford a stronger contrast of gran-deur and debasement than Tyre, at the period when that city was besieged by the conqueror, and the modern town of Tsour erected on its ashes."-Horne.

* As soon as he had taken the town, he burnt it down to the ground, and destroyed and enslaved all the inhabitants. Eight thousand he slew in the sackage of the town; and two thousand of those, whom he took prisoners, he caused to be crucified; a piece of cruelty this, highly unbecoming a generous conqueror. But, to palliate the matter, he gave out, that it was done by way of just revenge upon them, for their murdering their masters, and that, being originally but slaves, crucifixion was the proper punishment for them. But this depended upon an old story. Some ages before, the slaves of Tyre, having made a conspiracy against their masters, murdered them all in one night, (except only Strato, whom his slave secretly saved,) and, having married their mistresses, continued masters of the town, and from them the present Tyrians were descended. So that Alexander pretended, on this occasion, to revenge on them the murder that was committed by their progenitors so many ages before; though, in reality, it was to gratify his rage for being so long detained before the place, and there so valiantly resisted. Recovering however its beauty and riches again, it was invested with the privileges of a Roman city for its fidelity, and, in the flourishing times of Christianity, was the metropolitan see of the province of Phoenicia; but now that it is fallen into the hands of the Turks, there is not the least similitude of that glory for which it was once renowned .- Prideaux.

governor, and which he took after a siege of two months. *

When Sanballat found that Alexander was before Tyre, he took that opportunity of going over with eight thousand of his own men, to the enemy's camp, delivering up his trust, and transferring his allegiance from Darius to Alexander, who received him with open arms, and desired to know his pleasure. So when Alexander had received him kindly, Sanballat told him, that he had a son-in-law, whose name was Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua, the highpriest of the Jews, who, together with great numbers of that people following him, desired nothing more than leave to build a temple in that province; setting forth also, that it would be Alexander's interest to permit it, if it were but to divide the power of the Jews, and to prevent commotions, for that they were numerous, and as likely to be troublesome to other kings, as they were formerly to the Syrians.

This favour was no sooner granted, than they all applied themselves to the building of the temple; Manasseh was ordained to be the high-priest, and the honour to descend to the posterity of Sanballat's daughter, as he promised to himself; but after several months spent before Tyre, and two more at Gaza, Sanballat died. Alexander, upon the taking of Gaza, advanced to Jer-

usalem, which greatly perplexed Jaddua the high-priest, who knew not how to deport himself before a prince whom he had so highly provoked by a refusal to comply with his orders; wherefore he appointed public prayers and sacrifices to be offered up to God for his assistance and protection, and for the common welfare of the people.

On the night following God appeared to the high-priest in a dream, bidding him be of good courage, adorn the city, and without ceremony open the gates, and cause the people to march out in white garments to meet Alexander, together with himself and the rest of the priests in the habits of their order, depending

upon providence for the rest.

Jaddua, upon waking, told the citizens with great joy the substance of this revelation, and put every thing in order to attend the approach of the king. Receiving intelligence soon after, that he was drawing near toward the city, Jaddua advanced, together with his priests and the citizens, in pomp and solemnity, to a place called Sapha, an eminence or watchtower which commanded a view both of the city and temple. The Phœnicians and Chaldeans determined on a general plunder and massacre, and vowed every instance of revenge that indignation could suggest to a victorious prince, under the sense and provocation of the affront he had received. But in the event they found their expectations disappointed; for, when Alexander saw, from a distance, the order of the procession, the people in white, with the priests at the head of them in their robes of fine linen, and the high priest himself in his purple and scarlet clothing, his mitre upon his head, and a golden plate upon his forehead, with the name of God engraven upon it, the majesty of the spectacle struck him with such profound awe, that he advanced to him in person, adored the sacred inscription, and saluted the high-priest himself: all the Jews, at the same time, with one

^{*} This place being an inlet to Egypt, Alexander could not march thither till he had taken it : and it cost him and all his army two months' time before he could be master of it. This stop, with two dangerous wounds which he got during the siege, provoked him out of measure : so that when the city was taken, he killed ten thousand of the inhabitants, and sold the rest, with their wives and children, into slavery. He dragged Betis alive by the heels behind a chariot about the city till he was killed, instead of treating him for his valour and fidelity as a generous conqueror ought to have done, boasting, that in this he imitated Achilles his progenitor, who, according to Homer, dragged Hector round the walls of Troy. Plutarch tells us, that he got so great spoils in the sackage of this city, that besides other considerable compliments to his friends, he sent 500 talents weight of frankincense, and 100 talents weight of myrrh to Leonidas his governor, bidding him no more be a niggard to the gods.—Millar.

loud acclamations, and gathering in multitudes about him.

The kings of Syria, and the rest that were there present, were so amazed at Alexander's behaviour, that they could hardly think he enjoyed his reason. Parmenio* alone took the freedom to ask him, in a familiar way, how it came to pass that he should descend to bow to a Jewish priest? Alexander replied, "I do not adore the man, but the God whom he erves. For, some time past, when I was at Dium in Macedonia, I saw this man I emember, and in this very habit. I was then deliberating what course I should take to conquer Asia; and this very person bade me pass my army over the river, and be confident, that if I would take his counsel, I should make myself master of the Persian empire. Upon the view of this man, and in this habit, I call to mind my dream at Dium, and that this is the lively figure of what I saw there in a vision, and of the person that encouraged me to this expedition; so that it is not without a divine impulse that I undertake this war; and I make no doubt of gaining my point upon the Persians, and succeeding in all things to my wish."

After this discourse to Parmenio, the king embraced Jaddua, and was conducted

heart and voice saluting Alexander with into the city by the rest of the priests, where he went up to the temple, and sacrificed in form, according to order, paying also a singular veneration to the high-priest himself, who showed the king, when the ceremony was over, the book of Daniel,+ and in it the prediction of a certain Greek, in time to come, that should make himself master of the Persian empire, which Alexander interpreted of himself; and then with great satisfaction he discharged the multitude, till the day following, at which time he called them

^{*} Parmenio was a celebrated general in the armies of Alexander, who enjoyed the king's confidence, and was more attached to his person as a man than as a monarch. When Darius king of Persia offered Alexander all the country which lies at the west of the Euphrates, with his daughter Statira in marriage, and ten thousand talents of gold, Parmenio took occasion to observe, that he would without hesitation accept of these conditions if he were Alexander; 'So would I, were I Parmenio,' replied Alexander. This friendship, so true and inviolable, was sacrificed to a moment of resentment and suspicion; and Alexander, who had too eagerly listened to a slight and perhaps a false accusation, ordered Parmenio and his son to be put to death, as if guilty of treason against his person. Parmenio was in the 70th year of his age, B. C. 330. He died in the greatest popularity; and it has been judiciously observed, that Parmenio obtained many victories without Alexander, but Alexander not one without Parmenio. -Lempriere.

⁺ Namely, what is written of the ram, and the he-goat, chap. viii. where that he-goat is interpreted to be the king of Grecia, who should conquer the Medes and Persians, ver. 20; as likewise what is written by the same prophet, of the same Grecian king, chap. xi. 3; for both these prophecies foretold the destruction of the Persian king. *Prideaux's* Connection .- The figure of a ram, sculptured on the staircase leading up to the palace of Persepolis, may be seen in the drawings of its majestic ruins, taken on the spot, by Chardin, Le Bruyn, and Sir Robert Ker Porter. We learn from ancient au-thors, that the figure of a goat was represented in the royal standard of the Macedonian kings. The origin of this device commenced with Caranus, the first of the Macedonian sovereigns. The reason why he did so, is thus given. Caranus, it seems, was a native of Argos, and a remote descendant of the renowned Hercules. Why he quitted his native city, is not said; but all authors agree, that he left it, accompanied by a considerable body of Greeks, in search of a foreign settlement. Consulting the oracle, where he should proceed, and what measures he ought to take, in establishing his colony, he was answered, that he should be guided in his measures by the direction of the goats. It is very probable that Caranus, when he received this response, did not understand it. He, however, in pursuance of his first intention, entered the country, since known by the name of Macedonia, and particularly the small principality of Æmathia, then governed by a prince called Midas, and drew near to its capital, which was then called Edessa. The sky being suddenly overcast, and a great storm coming on, Caranus observed a herd of goats running for shelter to the city. Immediately recollecting the response of the oracle, he commanded his men to follow them closely, and entering the city by surprise, he possessed himself of it, and afterwards of the kingdom. In gratitude to his conductors, the goats, he changed the name of the place into Ægea, or the city of goats, and called his people Ægeates. He likewise made use of a goat in his standard, in order to perpetuate the memory of this extraordinary event. We hence clearly see, that as a ram was the symbol of the Medo-Persian empire, so that of a goat was symbolical of Alexander the Great, king of Macedon .- Bell.

together again, to know what request they an immunity of the seventh year's trihad to make him. bute, as they did not sow that year, Alex-

The high-priest made answer, that they only desired his leave to enjoy the freedom of their own laws, and that they might be exempted from the seventh year's tribute, which was readily granted them.

The high-priest made answer, that they ander asked what country tioners were. They told Hebrews, but that they we chemites by the Sidonians.

The question was put the whether they were Jews of the sidonians whether they were Jews of the sidonians.

They also besought him farther, to allow the same freedom to the Jews in Babylon and Media,—which was likewise granted; offering them, moreover, that if any of them were disposed to take up arms in his service, they should be received into his army, and enjoy the liberty of exercising their religion as before, which generosity brought great numbers over to him.

Affairs being thus settled at Jerusalem, Alexander marched with his army from place to place among the neighbouring cities, and wherever he came he was well received.

The Samaritans, whose capital at that time was Shechem, and peopled by Jewish deserters, observing how honourably Alexander treated the Jews, began to think themselves of acknowledging his government, and returning to their former profession; for these people were ever disposed to change with the revolution of success; who, when they found the Jews in distress, thus argued: "They are strangers to us; we have nothing to do with them." But as soon as ever fortune smiled upon them, they claimed kindred, and valued themselves upon the very heraldry of their descent from Joseph and his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Alexander was hardly out of the city when the Shechemites, in great pomp and parade, and wonderful joy in their looks, presented themselves before him in company with the troops that Sanballat had sent over to him; requesting the king, that he would vouchsafe to honour their city and temple with his presence.

The king spoke them fair, and promised to visit them; but upon their desiring an immunity of the seventh year's tribute, as they did not sow that year, Alexander asked what countrymen the pititioners were. They told him they were Hebrews, but that they were called Shechemites by the Sidonians.

The question was put to them again, whether they were Jews or not? They answered, they were not. Whereupon, Alexander said, "I have granted this to the Jews. But, however, when I come back again, I shall do what I think reasonable, upon a fuller information of the matter."

The Shechemites were dismissed; but he took Sanballat's men along with him into Egypt, allotting them a distribution of lands to live upon there, which they had afterwards in Thebes, where they were put in garrison.

After the death of Alexander, who did not long survive the unfortunate Darius,* the empire was parted among the chief

^{*} After the battle of Arbela, wherein he was sore discomfited, he made his escape into Media, and having got some few forces together, thought to have tried his fate in one battle more; when Bessus, his governor of Bactria, and Nabazanes, another Persian nobleman, conspired together, and having seized the poor king, and made him their prisoner, bound him in chains of gold, and shut him up in a covered chariot, and so carried him with them towards Bactria, intending, if Alexander pursued them, to purchase their peace by de-livering him up into his hands; but if he did not, to kill him and seize his kingdom, and so renew the war. Alexander having heard what these traitors had done, made all the haste he could to rescue Darius out of their hands; but when, after several days' march, he came up with them, (be-cause Darius refused to mount on horseback, for his more speedy flight with them,) they gave him several mortal wounds and left him dying in the He was dead before Alexander came : but when he saw his corpse, he could not forbeat shedding tears at so melancholy a spectacle: and having cast his cloak over it, he ordered that it should be wrapped up therein, and carried to his mother Sisygambis, at Shushan, (where he had left her, with the other captive ladies,) to be buried there with a royal funeral (for which himself allowed the expense) in the sepulchre of the kings of Persia. The traitor Bessus met with a due punishment from the conqueror, who continued his kindness to the unfortunate family of Darius. In Darius the empire of Persia was extinguished 228 years after it had been founded by Cyrus the Great.-Prideaux's Connexion.

commanders of his army, only the tem- empire broken, and parcelled out into ple near Gerizim remained untouched. And if at any time the Jews at Jerusalem were found guilty of the violation of their laws, as in eating of the forbidden meats, the breach of the sabbath, or the like, they took sanctuary with the Shechemites, upon a pretence that they were unjustly accused.

About this time the high-priest Jaddua died; and Onias his son succeeded him in that dignity.

CHAPTER II.

Jerusalem is surprised by Ptolemy, who transplants divers colonies of the inhabitants into Egypt, and honours many of them with places of trust and importance.-Perpetual wars between the Jews of Jerusalem and the Samaritans .- Divers instances of regard and respect shown to the Jews by king Ptolemy.

WHEN Alexander king of Macedon had made himself absolute master of the Persian empire, and settled the affairs of the Jews, he departed this life,* and left the

* It is not well agreed among historians, how this great conqueror of the world died. Some of them are of opinion, that he was poisoned by the procurement of Antipater, whom he had left governor of all his dominions in his absence, and who, for his maladministration, had been lately dismissed; and therefore, fearing to be called to an account, did by the hands of his sons, who were about the person of the king, and one of them his cupbearer, execute this treason upon his master's life, in order to save his own: but, in the judgment of other historians, he died by nothing but excessive drinking; and thus they relate the story: "One day, after he had been sacrificing to the gods for the many victories he had obtained, he made an entertainment for his friends, wherein he drank very hard, and continued the debauch till late at night; when, returning from the feast, he and his company were invited by a physician of Thessalia, to come, and drink a little more at his house. Alexander accepted of the offer: and, as there were twenty in company, he first drank to cach of them in their order, and so pledged them again, and then called for the Herculean cup. There was in company one Prodeas, a Macedonian, but a terrible drinker, and to him the king drank this Herculean brim-full, (which they tell us held six of our bottles,) and not long after, pledged him in the same; but, immediately after the second cup, he dropped down upon the place, and then ject of praise and panegyric is to lay ill examples fell into a violent fever, of which he died, in the before princes, as if such oppressions of mankind

many principalities. Asia fell to Antigonus. Babylon, with the countries bordering upon it, to Seleucus. The Hel-

thirty-third year of his age, after a reign of twelve years, six years as king of Macedon, and six more as monarch of Asia." He was a man of a bold enterprising spirit, but fuller of fire than discretion. His actions, though they were attended with success, were carried on with a furious and extravagant rashness; and the few virtues that he had were obscured with much greater vices. When he had conquered Darius, he ordered himself to be worshipped as a god; and Callisthenes, who refused to do it, was shamefully put to death. He murdered, at a banquet, his friend Clitus, who had once saved his life in a battle, because he enlarged upon the virtues and exploits of Philip, and preferred them to those of his son; and he is said to have set on fire the town of Persepolis, in a fit of madness and intoxication, encouraged by the courtesan Thais. Vain-glory was the predominant passion of his soul; and the fables of the ancient Greek heroes the only charts by which he steered his conduct. This was the reason that he dragged Betis round the walls of Gaza, in the same manner as Achilles had used Hector; that he undertook that hazardous expedition into India, as Hercules had done before him; that he made a drunken procession through Caramania, because Bacchus is said to have done the like in the same place; and that he affected to be called the son of Jupiter, because most of the ancient heroes pretended that they had for their fathers one god or other. The truth is, this young conqueror, having the Iliads of Homer in great admiration, always carried them with him, laid them under his pillow when he slept, and read in them on all leisure opportunities; and therefore finding Achilles to be the great hero in that poem, he thought every thing said of him worthy of imitation, and the readiest way to become a hero himself, which was the main impulsive cause of all his undertakings: but, in reality, were his actions to be duly estimated, he could deserve no other character than that of the great cut-throat of the age in which he lived. The folly of mankind, however, and the error of historians are such, that they usually make the actions of war, bloodshed, and conquest, the subjects of their highest encomiums, and those their most celebrated heroes that most excel in these; whereas, those only are the true heroes who most benefit the world, by promoting the peace and welfare of mankind. In a righteous cause indeed, and the just defence of a man's country, all actions of valour are just reasons of praise; but, in all other cases, victory and conquest are no more than murder and rapine, and those who thus op-press the world with the slaughter of men, the desolation of countries, the burning of cities, and the other calamities which attend war, are the scourges of God, the Attilas of the age in which they live, and the greatest plagues and calamities that happen to it; and therefore, to make these the subsander, and Egypt to Ptolemy, the son of Lagus. Upon this division there ensued a long war between these several princes, who were all competitors for the sovereign command, to the ruin of several considerable cities, and the loss of many lives.

The whole tract of Syria was abundantly sensible of this misery, under the government of Ptolemy,* otherwise called the Saviour, (though never any man had less pretence to that title than himself.) This was he who made himself master of Jerusalem by a stratagem; upon a Sabbath day, + under colour of devotion, he treacherously possessed himself of the city without the least apprehension of any danger, which made his entrance easy. His administration afterwards was etyrannical and barbarous.

But Ptolemy carried away many captives out of the mountainous part of Judea, from about Jerusalem, Samaria, and the mountain Gerizim, which he transported into Egypt; and then reflecting upon the solemn nature of an oath among the Jews, by their fidelity to Darius, even after his overthrow, notwithstanding the summons and the invitation of Alexander to come over to him, he disposed of them

lespont to Lysimachus, Macedon to Cas- | into strong-holds, garrisons, and places of trust, upon their oath of fidelity to be true to him and his successors; granting them also immunities and privileges in Alexandria, in common with the Macedonians; so that betwixt the temptation of Ptolemy's liberality on the one hand, and the pleasure and convenience of a fruitful country on the other, there came over a great number of Jews into Egypt from other parts.

But the Jews and the Samaritans could never be reconciled concerning their ancient laws and constitutions; the one insisting that the temple at Jerusalem was the only holy place, and that the Jews were not allowed to send their sacrifices any where else; the other declaring for the temple at Gerizim,-insomuch that there was a great deal of blood spilt upon the occasion. ‡

were the truest ways to honour and glory .- Diod. Sic. Arrian, Justin, Q. Curt., Plutarch, and

* He received the name of Soter, or Saviour, from the assistance he gave the people of Rhodes against their common enemy, Demetrius. Ptolemy has been commended for his abilities, not only as a sovereign, but as a writer; and among the many valuable compositions which have been lost, we have to lament a history of Alexander by the king of Egypt, greatly admired and valued for elegance and authenticity. All his successors were called Ptolemies from him.

† Agotharchides the Cnidian, confirms this in his history of the successors of Alexander, when he imputes the loss of their country and liberties to their vanity and superstition. His words are to their vanity and superstition. His words are these:—"There are a people that are known by the name of Jews, and have their habitation in a great and well fortified city called Jerusalem. These men fell into the hands of Ptolemy, and subjected themselves to a cruel slavery upon a fantastical scruple of conscience, that would not suffer them to take up arms against an oppressor in their own defence upon that day." in their own defence, upon that day."

I The Samaritans maintained, that their temple upon Mount Gerizim was the only true temple of the Lord; and the Jews, on the contrary, affirmed, theirs at Jerusalem was the only true one. The dispute was brought before the king; advocates on both sides were named; and it was agreed, that they who did not make their allegations good should be condemned to death. Both parties promised that they would produce all their testimonies from the law only. Andronicus, advocate for the Jews, spake first, and proved so very evidently from the scriptures the antiquity of the temple of Jerusalem, the succession of the high-priests, and the value which the Asiatic princes always had for that holy place, while, at the same time, they never so much as thought of the temple at Gerizim, that the king and his assessors declared he had carried his cause, and ordered Sabbæus and Theodosius, the advocates for the Samaritans, to be put to death. Whether there be any reality in this account of Josephus, or no, it is certain, that the Samaritans, in behalf of Mount Gerizim, have to plead,-that there Abraham, (Gen. xii. 6, 7, and xiii. 4.) and there Jacob, (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) built altars unto God, and, by their offering up sacrifices thereon, consecrated that place above all others to his worship; that, for this reason, God himself appointed it (Deut. xxvii. 12.) to be the hill of blessing; and that, accordingly, Joshua, on his entrance upon the land of Canaan, caused the blessings of God, and the care his large free heaves to said the care his large free heaves to be said. to such as would observe his laws, from hence to be pronounced; and lastly, that when he passed the Jordan, he built here an altar of the twelve stones which he took out of the river in his pas-sage, Deut. xxvii. 2—7. according to what God had commanded him by Moses. But herein the Samaritans are guilty of a great prevarication; for

On the demise of Ptolemy Soter, | government of Egypt, and pursued his father's example in continuing the Musæum,* or college of learned men, which he had erected, and in augmenting the noble library + which he had left behind him at Alexandria.

they have changed the words in the text of Deuteronomy, and instead of Ebal (as it is in the original) have put Mount Gerizim, the better to serve their cause. The truth of the matter is, since Manasseh was resolved to make a schism in the Jewish church, and Sanballat to build a temple for him, the reasons above mentioned might be inducement enough for them to make choice of that place, rather than any other; but from thence to pretend to vie with the temple at Jerusalem, is highly arrogant; because the Jews have authentic testimonies, that the public exercise of the true religion was settled among them, and solemnized at Jerusalem, long before this temple at Gerizim was thought of. In short, the religious observances of the Jewish worship did always attend the ark of the covenant, but the ark was never once at Gerizim, nor indeed was it fixed in any settled place, until David took it to his palace at Jerusalem, and Solomon had built a temple for it in the

same city.—Prideaux and Calmet.

* This was a large edifice in Alexandria, which stood in that quarter of the city called Brachium, and was designed for the habitation of such learned men as made it their study to improve philosophy, and all useful knowledge, like that of the Royal society at London, and the Royal academy of sciences at Paris. This building, which, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, surpassed in beauty and magnificence all the temples in the world, except the capitol at Rome, was not far distant from the palace, and surrounded with a portico, or piazza, where the philosophers walked and conversed, and had in it a common hall where they used to eat together. The members of this society were under the government of a president, whose office was of that consideration and dignity, that during the reign of the Ptolemies he was always constituted by those kings, and afterwards by the Roman emperors. The revenues, appointed for the maintenance of this college, from the first foundation of it, were large. From it did proceed men of very excellent literature; and to the Musseum it was owing, that Alexandria, for a great many ages together, was the greatest school of learning in all those parts of the world; until, in the war which the Alexandrians had with Aurelian, the Roman emperor, all that quarter of the city, where the Musæum stood, was destroyed, and with it this college of learned men dissolved.—Prideaux.

† This library was at first placed in the Musæum, but when it was filled with books to the number of four hundred thousand volumes, there was another library erected within the Serapeum (or the famous temple where the image of Serapis was set up,) which increased in time to the number of th

There were at this time captives in Philadelphus his son succeeded to the Egypt, to the number of a hundred and twenty thousand Jews, which Philadelphus, (so called by antiphrasis, because he killed two of his brothers,) commanded to be set at liberty upon the following occasion.

> Demetrius Phalereus having under his care and trust the king's library, made it his business to make a collection of all books that were extant.

> This being the peculiar bias of his disposition, he bought up all the choicest books which he deemed worthy of the king's perusal. The king on a certain occasion inquired of his librarian how many thousand volumes he thought he had got? He told him, two hundred thousand: but that he hoped in a short time to make them five hundred thousand: as he was certainly informed, that there was a great number of choice manuscripts among the Jews concerning their laws.

hundred thousand volumes, and these two put together, made up the number of seven hundred thousand volumes in the whole, of which the royal libraries of the Ptolemean kings at Alexandria are said to consist. Their manner of collecting them was not so very honourable; for whatever books were brought by any foreigner into Egypt, these they seized, and, sending them to the Musæum, (where they maintained people for that purpose,) they caused them to be transcribed, and then sent the copies to the owners, but laid up the originals in the library. When Julius Cæsar waged war with the Alexandrians, it so happened, that the library in the Brachium was burnt, and the four hundred thousand volumes, that were laid up there, were all consumed. But that of the Sarapeum still remained, and soon grew to be larger and of more eminent note than the former; but at length, in the year of our Lord 642, when the Saracens made themselves masters of the city, they totally destroyed it. For, when the general of the army wrote to Omar, who was then the caliph, or emperor of the Saracens, to know his pleasure concerning it, his answer was, " That if these books contained what was agreeing with the Alcoran, there was no need of them, because the Alcoran alone was sufficient for all truth; but if they contained what was contrary to it, they were not to be endured:" In consequence of this answer, they were all condemned to the flames without any further examination; and for that purpose were distributed among the public baths, where, for the space of six months, they were used for fuel instead of wood.—Prideaux.

customs, and ceremonies worthy his perusal, and the honour of a place in the royal library. But being written in their own language, it would be a matter of great difficulty to translate them into Greek; for though there might seem to be some resemblance and affinity between the language and writing of one and of the other, there were yet idioms peculiar to each, distinct from the other.

He added farther, that this circumstance should by no means discourage a laudable attempt to translate them into the Greek, especially as there was money in the treasury sufficient to defray the expenses incident to the undertaking.

The king highly commended this project of Demetrius;* and wrote to the high-priest of the Jews to give him his assistance in providing these copies.

There was one Aristæus, a particular confidant of the king's, who, on account of his great modesty, had his master's ear and confidence. This person had been a long time very desirous of procuring the liberty of the Jews; and embracing this opportunity, applied first to Sosibius, Tarantinus, and Andreas, three captains of the guards, to try how they stood affected; and upon finding them well disposed, he

besought them earnestly to assist him with their interest toward the doing of so good an office; upon which assurance he addressed himself to the king after this manner:

"If I may presume, Sir, to lay my thoughts at your royal feet, in all simplicity and without disguise, since it is your pleasure that the laws of the Jews be not only transcribed but translated to answer your present purpose, I cannot see how it can be fairly done while so many of that nation are in bondage under your government, from whom you require and expect so necessary an assistance and service. It seems to me to be an act worthy of your magnificence and goodness, to set these poor people at liberty from their present misery; for, by all that ever I could understand, the same God that overrules your government, is the author of their laws: and both we and they worship the same Creator and Almighty Power, only under the name of Jupiter, or Jove, (a Juvando, from helping,) being the life of us all. Wherefore you may be helping, out of a reverence to that God whom they love and worship with a zeal and affection beyond all other mortals, to restore these wretched exiles to their own country, that they may end their days where they have received their birth, as in the place where providence had assigned them. I do not presume, Sir, to interpose on their behalf out of any partiality upon the account of tribe or extraction, but in consideration that the same God is the Creator of us all, and that so noble an act of your royal clemency would be acceptable even to God himself."

The king then asked him, how many thousands there were that would stand in need of this indulgence? Andreas, being present, made answer, that he believed there might be a hundred and twenty-thousand souls.

"Well," says the king to Aristæus, "and dost thou take this for so moderate a request?" Sosibius, and the rest that

^{*} Demetrius Phalereus was a disciple of Theophrastus, who gained such an influence over the Athenians, by his eloquence and the purity of his manners, that he was elected decennial archôn, B. C. 317. He so embellished the city, and rendered himself so popular by his magnificence, that the Athenians raised 360 brazen statues to his honour. Yet in the midst of all this popularity, his enemies raised a sedition against him, and he was condemned to death, and all his statues thrown down, after retaining the sovereign power for ten years. He fled without concern or mortification to the court of Ptolemy Lagus, where he met with kindness and cordiality. The Egyptian monarch consulted him concerning the succession of his children; and Demetrius advised him to raise to the throne the children of Eurydice, in preference to the offspring of Berenice. According to some, this counsel so irritated Philadelphus the son of Berenice, that after his father's death he sent the philosopher into upper Egypt, and there detained him in strict confinement. Demetrius, tired with his situation, put an end to his life by the bite of an asp, 214 years before Christ.—Lempriere.

were present, observed, "that it would be an action becoming the dignity of so great a prince, to be merciful to others, in acknowledgment of the honour that he himself had received from above." there, and a commiseration of the poor and weak that suffer under the power of oppression and violence, I do hereby expressly charge and command, that all the Jews that are at this time in servitude,

The king was so well pleased with this proposal, that he ordered an allowance of twenty drachmas to the soldiers for every Jew they had in custody, to be made good to them on the next payday, over and above their stipend, with a further promise to answer the desire of Aristæus, (or, in truth, the appointment of the Almighty,) in all points to ratify the whole by a public edict, wherein should be comprehended, not only those which his father or his army had carried away, but those also that either before or since that time had been taken into captivity.

His friends told him, that at this rate these people would stand him in at least four hundred talents. But the king scrupled not that sum, to effect so glorious an undertaking; "for," said he, "the thing shall be done."

The following is a copy of the proclamation:

"It is our royal will and pleasure, that all the Jews whatsoever that have been subdued, or taken by any of my father's forces, upon their incursions into Syria or Phenice, and those brought away or sold into any of my dominions, likewise those that either before or since that time have been sold or enslaved, be set free, upon the payment of twenty drachmas for every such slave; the soldiers to receive this redemption money, together with their pay, and the rest out of the treasury; for the forcing many people away into captivity, and the revenging of their country by the outrage and license of the soldiers, for the sake purely of the pillage and booty, was a course that my father undoubtedly neither intended nor approved, and a thing contrary to common equity and reason; wherefore, out of a reverence to the memory of my fa-

weak that suffer under the power of oppression and violence, I do hereby expressly charge and command, that all the Jews that are at this time in servitude, be immediately dismissed, upon the payment of the aforesaid sum to their respective masters, in obedience to this our mandate, without any fraud whatsoever. And farther, that this our proclamation be made public for three days successively, after the receipt of it; and in the mean time, that the aforesaid masters bring in a list of their prisoners to such officers, and in such a manner as we shall find most for our purpose. And all this to be done upon the peril of the confiscation of his goods, if any man shall be found acting contrary to the tenor hereof."

Upon the first sight of this grant, the king observed, that the provision for the liberty of those that were taken either before or after, was not so particularly expressed, but there was room to evade it; so that he of his own curiosity and good pleasure, superadded a latitude of indulgence in those cases, and gave positive orders to the collectors of the tribute, and the officers of his treasury, to have the money in readiness for the ransom of the Jews.

Within seven days the whole work was accomplished at the king's charge, to the value of four hundred and sixty talents; the masters insisting upon the same rate for the children that they had for the rest, though the king's edict extended no farther than to those that were brought away prisoners, without comprehending such as were born there.

When the illustrious design was thus far executed, with the strictest justice and honour, the king commanded Demetrius to publish his royal will and pleasure concerning the translation of the Jewish books and records, so that the librarian caused his petition to be registered, setting forth the presents that were made towards the promotion of the great work.

Now the petition aforesaid ran in terms

to this purpose:

"Demetrius to the great king .- Since it is your royal will and command that I should do my endeavour to supply what may be yet farther added toward the perfection of your library, and to find out what curious and useful books and copies may have hitherto escaped my search and inquiry, this is humbly to inform your majesty, that, after much study and thought upon this matter, I do not find any thing so conducive to your present purpose as the history of the Jewish laws; for being written in the Hebrew idiom, it will be hard for us to understand them. Besides, the version we have already of them is not so correct as it should be, for want of a royal authority and encouragement toward the making of them known; so that it will be necessary to have them accurately translated, as being a body of the wisest and most perfect laws that are extant, God himself having been the author of them. For this reason Hecateus the Abberite observes, that we find in none of the poets or historians any mention of these laws, or of the administration of them; the original and institution of them being sacred, and not to be profaned by unhallowed lips. Wherefore your majesty may be pleased, if you should judge it meet, to write to the high-priest of the Jews only to send you out of every tribe six elders, whom he shall make choice of, as men best skilled in the knowledge of their constitutions and customs; and by their assistance, in the interpreting and expounding of their writings, we may be able to gather something from them to your majesty's satisfaction."

The king, upon this motion, gave directions for letters to be written to Eleazar the high-priest, according to the proposal of Demetrius; taking notice also of the general release of all the Jews that were prisoners in Egypt.

The king also sent a present of fifty talents of gold, for cups and bowls, and

gifts to a great value in precious stones, ordering those that had care of the coffers, wherein they are deposited, to let the lapidaries choose as they thought fit; and beside all this, the king assigned a hundred talents more for sacrifices, and other services of the temple.

Upon the death of the high-priest Onias, his son Simon succeeded to the office; he was a person of singular piety towards God, and exemplary tenderness and humanity toward mankind; from which character he was surnamed the Just. Simon lived not long, and leaving behind him only one son, a child, whose name was Onias, his brother Eleazar entered upon the pontificate; and it was to this Eleazar that Ptolemy wrote the following letter:—

"King Ptolemy to Eleazar the highpriest, sendeth greeting.-Whereas there were great numbers of Jews in my dominions that were brought captives hither by the Persians while they were in power; and whereas my father had so great a value for them, that he intrusted several of them with posts in his armies, and in his strong holds and garrisons, for a check upon the Egyptians, with the allowance of large pensions for their service; be it known unto you, that I myself also have been well disposed towards the Jews, since my accession to the throne of Egypt, having set above an hundred thousand of them at liberty, and paid the charge of their ransoms out of my own coffers. Some of them I have made use of in my army, others, as I found them discreet and trusty, I have entertained about my person, and in the court, thinking that I can do nothing more acceptable to God than good offices to others for his sake, to whom I owe my government and being; wherefore out of a desire to serve the Jews all over the world to the uttermost of my power, I have proposed translating the books of your law into Greek, and giving the translation a place in my own library. In order to the compassing this

design, I shall esteem it a great favour if you will make choice of six elders out of each of your several tribes, whom you know to have the greatest skill and understanding in the laws, and send them to assist me in this translation; for I promise myself, if I succeed in this undertaking, to gain immortal honour by it. The persons I employ to treat with you about this affair, are Andreas, a captain of guards, and Aristæus, two of my trusty and wellbeloved friends, whom I have charged also with a present of a hundred talents of silver for you; which I send towards your sacrifices and your temple. Your answer as soon as possible will be acceptable."

Upon the receipt of this letter, Eleazar, with all deference and respect, returned

the following answer:-

"Eleazar the high priest to king Ptolemy, greeting.-If it be well with your most excellent majesty, with your queen Arsinoe, and with your illustrious family, it is so likewise with your servants the Your most gracious letter is come to our hands, and we have read it in a full congregation with infinite joy and satisfaction, as an instance not only of your clemency and good-will towards a distressed people, but as a token also of your singular reverence for the worship of the great God. We have received also by the same hands, that is to say, by the hands of Andreas and Aristæus (your beloved and learned friends), twenty golden cups, thirty silver ones, five goblets, and a table to be consecrated for the service of the altar, together with a hundred talents towards the charge of sacrifices, and other services for the temple: all which we have showed and represented unto our brethren, in the most affectionate terms of gratitude and respect; and we are all so sensible of the great obligations you have been pleased to lay upon as, that you may depend upon our readiness to serve and obey you in all things without reserve, to the uttermost of our power, in a just acknowledgment of your

grace and goodness. Pursuant to this sense and consciousness of our duty, we have recommended unto God in our public prayers the protection of your royal person, sister, and children, together with all that are near and dear to you, wishing peace and prosperity to yourself and people; and beseeching God, that the work you have now in hand, of compiling a collection and history of our laws and antiquities, may be of as much satisfaction and advantage to you as your own heart can desire. In order to this end I have sent six elders out of every tribe, with the law, to attend your pleasure, submitting ourselves upon the whole to your piety and justice, that after the transcribing of them, they may be returned to us safe by the same bearer; recommending your majesty to the providence of the Almighty."

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This was the high-priest's answer to the king's letter, to which were subjoined the names of the seventy elders that were sent by Eleazar upon this occasion, which names we need not enumerate in this place. But it would be doing injustice to the character and memory of this generous and pious prince, to omit in this part of our history the many and valuable presents he made upon the occasion, together with the extraordinary diligence and ardour he exerted in the promotion of the magnificent undertaking. As a memorial therefore of the same, we cite the following particulars, beginning with the golden table.

As to the dimensions, the king sent his artificers to learn out the measure of the former table at Jerusalem, and to see whether the place would not admit of a larger. They brought him word that he might make it as large as he pleased; whereupon he proposed to himself to make this five times larger than the other. But considering, that so great a bulk might possibly make it too cumbersome and unwieldy for daily use, and look more like a work of ostentation than

for service, he came to a resolution with respect to the dimensions.

Now the king was well versed in the nature and reason of things, and enjoyed such a presence of thought for the finding out of expedients and new inventions, that it was a common practice with him to form his own designs, and prescribe to the very workmen themselves their precise rules and measures; so that for the proportions of this table, he ordered it to be two cubits and a half in length, and one and a half in height; all of solid gold, and round about it a border to be made of a hand's breadth, set out on three sides with curious carving of flower works, twisted strings, and other agreeable figures; which being triangular, were likewise so equal and just, that turn it which way you would, (as it was easily transposed,) the prospect would be the same.

This table was delicately wrought all over, but the part of it especially that was most in sight; with an intermixture of precious stones looped together by golden buckles, to the string work before-mentioned, at equal distances one from another. The outside of it was set with other rich stones of an oval cut, and an embossed work of twigs and branches creeping round the table. There were also several sorts of fruits wrought together under the figure of a crown, as bunches of grapes, ears of corn, pomegranates, &c., all in their proper and natural position, and expressed by stones set in gold, bearing the native colour of what they represented. Under this crown was another row of ovals; which, for the matter, the order, and ornament, was so like the former, and so exactly uniform, that there was no distinguishing one part from the other. Under the table from side to side, there passed a golden plate of four fingers' breadth; and into this plate the feet were fastened with springs and hooks to keep them firm and steady, by binding the cover and the frame together.

There was drawn also upon this table the resemblance of a meander, the course of which was marked out with stones of lustre and value; rubies, emeralds, and whatever else was most precious or excellent in their kind. Along this meander there were divers pieces of sculpture in bows and knots, which were so embellished by an orderly disposition of crystal and amber, for the advantage of the view, that it made altogether one of the most agreeable spectacles imaginable.

The cornices of the feet had the resemblance of a lily work; the stem upright, with the leaves and tendrils winding under the table.

The basis was a hand's breadth over, garnished with rubies, and a border round about it; and two hands distance between the feet that rested upon it.

The graving work of these feet was incomparable, being the fancy of a foliage of the vine and the ivy, so exquisitely executed, with grapes and berries, that it was hard to distinguish them. But upon the least breath of air, the leaves would move and play, as if it had been the work of nature rather than art.

This table consisted of three parts, which were so artificially put together, that there was no joints to be discerned, or so much as to be imagined where they met, and the thickness of it was half a cubit.

This great prince convinced all, by the magnificence of his present, the inestimable value of the materials, and the exquisite curiosity and perfection of the whole work, that what he abated of his first project in size and proportion, was abundantly supplied by a most munificent expense in art and ornament.

There was also a pair of large golden cups, wrought half way to the bowl, and inlaid with all sorts of precious stones, orderly ranged into the resemblance of a meander of a cubit over, with delicate figures of twigs, branching out into a kind of net-work, up to the brim, and interlaced

value, as before; the borders were also set with an intermixture of lilies, flowers, vines, grapes, and the like, round the lips of the vessel.

This was the form of finishing of these goblets; and for the contents, they held three or four gallons a piece; and the silver pieces were so glorious and radiant, that no chrystal was comparable to them.

The king, after all this, furnished thirty golden vessels more, richly adorned with precious stones, and overshadowed with vine and ivy-leaves in curious sculpture.

Neither was the excellency of these miraculous pieces wholly ascribed to the design and mastery of the artificer; but the king himself took a kind of pleasure in contributing to the perfection of this work, making it a great part of his care and business to visit the shops, and superintend the masters themselves in the execution of their charge, which rendered them much more industrious and intent upon their business, when they saw the king himself had a more than ordinary regard and concern for the prosecution of the glorious undertaking.

Upon the delivery of these donations, and the dedication of them to the use and service of the holy temple at Jerusalem, Eleazar treated the king's commissioners with all due honour and acknowledgment, and then dismissed them with good wishes and presents, to return to their master.

The king had no sooner heard of their arrival at Alexandria,* and that they had

with several curious designs, about four brought the seventy elders with them, fingers broad, and adorned with stones of than he sent for his two ambassadors. Andreas and Aristæus, from whom he received Eleazar's letter, and particular sa-

> Nile, drew thither the commerce of the East and West, and made it, in a very little time, one of the most flourishing cities in the world. It has still some small repute for merchandise; but what has occasioned the decay of its trade, is the dis-covery of the passage to the East-Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, or on the south of Africa. Before this discovery, the whole spice-trade was carried into this part of the world through this city; for the spices were brought from the East-Indies. up the Red sea, to Egypt, and from thence were carried by land on camels to Alexandria. When Egypt became a province of the Roman empire, this city continued the metropolis of it; and when the Arabians took it, (which was about 640 years after Christ,) there were four thousand palaces still standing in it, four thousand bagnios, forty thousand Jews paying tribute, four hundred squares, and twelve thousand persons that sold herbs and fruit. Here (as we said) was the famous Serapeum, or temple of Serapis, for beauty of workmanship, and magnificence of structure, in ferior to nothing but the Roman capitol, Here was the Musæum, or college of philosophers; and here, that noble library, which was erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus, but unhappily burnt in the war between Cæsar and Pompey. But notwithstanding all its former splendour and magnificence, this city is now become a poor village, (by the Egyptians called Rachot,) without any thing remarkable in it, except its ruins, and the remains of its former grandeur; only, without the city, Pompey's pillar (the shaft whereof is six fathoms high, all of one piece of curious granite) is justly admired, as one of the first columns that is any where to be seen. Calmet and Wells.—The aspect of ancient Alexandria is thus described by Volney: "In our country," says he, "ruins are an object of curiosity. Scarcely can we discover, in unfrequented places, some ancient castle, whose decay announces rather the desertion of its master, than the wretchedness of the neighbourhood. In Alexandria, on the contrary, we no sooner leave the new town, than we are astonished at the sight of an immense extent of ground overspread with ruins. The earth is covered with the remains of lofty buildings destroyed; whole fronts crumbled down, roofs fallen in, battlements decayed, and the stones disfigured and corroded by saltpetre. The traveller passes over a vast plain, furrowed with trenches, pierced with wells, divided by walls in ruins, covered with ancient columns and modern tombs, amid palm trees and nopals, and where no living creature is to be met with, but owls, bats, and jackals. The inhabitants, accustomed to this scene, behold it without emotion; but the stranger, in whom the recollection of ancient ages is revived by the novelty of the objects around him, feels a sensation, which not unfrequently dissolves him into tears, inspiring reflections which fill his heart with sadness, while his soul is elevated by their sublimity." From the ancient we turn to

^{*} This city, which was built by Alexander the Great in the year 332 B. C. was, after his death, made the capital of Egypt by Ptolemy and his successors for almost three hundred years. Dinocrates (who rebuilt the temple or Diana at Ephesus, after it had been burnt by Herostratus) was the architect, who drew the plan of it, and had the chief direction of the work; but, to have it carried on with more expedition, Alexander appointed Cleomenes, one of his captains, to be the surveyor of it; and for this reason, Justin. lib. xiii. c. 4. calls him the founder of it. The happy situation of this city, between the Mediterranean and the Red sea, and at a short distance from the river

immediate conference with the seventy persons that were sent over to him to interpret the laws, that no person had access to him upon any particular business, which was contrary to his usual custom of giving private audience once in five days, and public once a month.

Having thus secured himself from any of those casual interruptions, he waited the arrival of Eleazar's agents, who attended him soon after with presents from the high-priest, and certain manuscripts of the Jewish laws, written upon parch-

Upon the king's asking for the books, they were produced to his admiration at the curiosity of the work; for the leaves were so artificially put together, that there was no discerning where one skin was

the new Alexandria; which, even in its state of decay, is still to Europeans the most interesting of the cities of Egypt. It is built chiefly along the coast, and has been surrounded by Ali Pasha with walls, but occupies only a small portion of the space enclosed within the Saracenic walls. The modern town is thus described by Dr Richardson, who visited Egypt in 1816-18: " Alexandria is surrounded with a high stone wall, entered by four gates, and contains about 14,000 inhabitants. The streets are narrow, dirty, and irregular. The houses are from three to four stories high, strong and substantial, but of a remarkably dull appearance, from their having few windows to the streets. The bazars are few, but are amply provided with cloth, tobacco, sherbet, and vegetables. The wharf presents an active scene of ships building, vessels taking in their cargoes, with heaps of grain and bales of goods piled up along the shore. But the European stranger is particularly struck with the crowds of naked porters that ply their busy task, and the swarms of horrid beggars that constantly importune him and harrow up his feelings. During the season of filling the cisterns (September,) the traveller can hardly stop for a moment without being jostled by a leathern bag of water, hanging on the lank sides of a raw-boned camel, towering along in her majestic pace to deposit it in the reservoirs. One troop after another occupies the streets during the whole of the day. Crowds of human beings, half naked, parade the streets also, with leathern sacks full of water, suspended from their shoulders, and resting upon their naked back and breast. Sometimes, with a cup in their hands, they call upon you to purchase a draught; at other times, they pass quietly on and deposit their burden in the reservoir, along with their fellow-labourers the camels."—Bell's Geog.

tisfaction to many questions relating there- joined to another: his majesty at the unto. His mind was so bent upon an same time telling them, that he had a great respect for the person that brought him that piece of exquisite workmanship, and a greater yet for him that sent it; but the greatest reverence of all for the Author of those laws that were now produced.

> The writings were then put into the hands of the officers that were to have them in charge, and the king embracing the deputies, told them, that he would only in the first place speak a word or two to the business they were come about, and after that take their persons into his peculiar care; as he looked upon the day of their arrival as so great a providence to him, he resolved to have it observed all the days of his life, as an anniversary festival in commemoration of the blessing.

> The king, in fine, told them that they should be his guests, and ordered them the most magnificent apartments in his own palace.

> The care of entertaining and providing for strangers was properly Nicanor's province, who appointed Dorotheus under him in this, as in other cases, to see that every thing was conducted with decorum.

> It was a maxim with this prince always to entertain strangers according to the customs and manners of their respective countries; orders were therefore given that the elders should be strictly treated according to this rule.

> The conduct of their entertainment was therefore committed to Dorotheus, as a person well versed in the manners and customs of the Jews.

> There were in the first place two seats, one on the king's right hand, the other on his left, by his own order, with all becoming deference to the commissioners.

> When the guests had taken their places, the king bade Dorotheus serve them after the same manner as he had formerly served their countrymen upon the like occasion; so that the Egyptian priests and officers that usually attended the king

one of their own deputies and priests, Elisa by name, was called upon by the king himself to pronounce the benediction upon the table, who thereupon stood up to give God thanks; after which solemnity, and a fervent prayer for the happiness of the king and his people, to the infinite satisfaction of all that were present, the company fell cheerfully to the fare that was provided for them.

The king took occasion while they were at dinner, to start several philosophical questions to pass from one subject to another, in order to sound their judgment and experience. The commissioners were pertinent to every point, and the king took such delight in their conversation, that they continued feasting and rejoicing for the space of twelve days.

The excellency of their judgment had a wonderful effect, not only upon the king, but over Menedemus the philosopher, who was brought to acknowledge an over-ruling providence, which put a final end to that controversy. The king acknowledged himself to be so exceedingly edified by conversing with these people, they having instructed him in the very art of government, that he ordered them a gratuity of three talents a man; and then they were conducted to their respective apartments.

At the end of three days, Demetrius took them with him by a causeway of seven furlongs in length, and a bridge of communication between the island and the continent, and advancing from thence northward, settled them in a house by the sea-side, where they might be free from noise or disturbance,—the retreat, in fine, being very commodious for men of study and contemplation. When they were disposed of in this commodious manner, he requested of them that they would immediately apply to the interpretation, bidding them God's speed in the arduous undertaking.

upon these occasions, were all discharged; kept close to their studies from day-break till three in the afternoon, which was their time of refreshment, -Dorotheus not forgetting, according to the king's order, to supply them with delicacies from his own table, over and above a competency of provisions at the king's ordinary allow-

> It was their custom to wait upon the king every morning at his levee, and thence to betake themselves to their task again, washing their hands with sea water before they entered upon their business.

> This version of the law was finished within the compass of seventy-two days at the expiration of which, Demetrins called all the Jews together into the place where it was translated, and in the presence of the interpreters read over the book, the assembly unanimously approving of the interpretation, and extolling Demetrius as the occasion of the great advantages they had received.

> He also desired that it might be read by the eminent men of the nation. And after this the high-priest, the elders, and the magistrates of the people proposed, that since the translation was so happily finished, the authority of it might be ratified, and the text remain unalterable for

> They also came to an unanimous resolution, that the book should be subjected to a farther examination and revision, and if there should be found any thing in it either redundant or defective, it might, upon mature consideration, be rectified: but that upon a farther approbation it should stand good for ever.

The king was hereby doubly pleased; first, for the gaining of his point; and secondly, that it succeeded so happily to the advantage of the public.

But when he came to hear it read to him, he was transported with joy, in the contemplation of the wisdom of the lawgiver, and entered into a discourse with Demetrius, in which he declared his firm They spared neither care nor pains, but persuasion, that neither any historian nor

poet could ever frame such incomparable laws.

Demetrius made answer, that the form of them being so manifestly divine, and the subject of them so venerable, people were afraid of meddling with them, especially considering what judgments had befallen several people for their temerity in profaning them; as Theopompus,* acting the part of a plagiary, in publishing texts of holy writ as his own invention, was struck with a fit of madness that held him thirty days; and in the intervals of his frenzy, was conscious of the sin, and asked God forgiveness for it, having revelations also in his sleep that it was his audacious curiosity, in confounding sacred things with profane, that brought this distemper upon him. But in fine, upon his repentance, and amendment, he was restored again to his right mind. And so it fared likewise with Theodectes + the poet, who, being struck blind upon the intermixing of divine writ with tragedy, was, upon the acknowledgment of his sin, restored to his sight again.

The king, upon the receipt of these books from Demetrius, blessed God and worshipped, giving a strict command for the preserving of them safe and entire; desiring the interpreters also, that he might see them again as often as they could upon a visit; assuring them that it should turn to their honour as well as their advantage.

* A famous Greek historian of Chios, disciple of Isocrates, who flourished B. C. 354. All his compositions are lost, except a few fragments quoted by ancient writers. He is compared to Thucydides and Herodotus as an historian, yet he is severely censured for his satirical remarks and illiberal reflections. He obtained a prize in which his master was a competitor, and he was liberally rewarded for composing the best funeral oration in honour of Mausolus.—Lempriere.

honour of Mausolus.—Lempriere.

† Theodectes was a Greek orator and poet of Phaselis in Pamphylia, son of Aristander, and disciple of Isocrates. He wrote fifty tragedies, besides other works now lost. He had such a happy memory, that he could repeat with ease whatever verses were spoken in his presence. When Alexander passed through Phaselis, he crowned with garlands the statue which had been erected to the memory of the deceased poet.—Lempriere.

He was obliged at present, he said, to part with them; but whenever they should come hereafter for their pleasure, they should not fail of such an acknowledgment as might become wise men to receive, and a great prince to give.

Upon this the king dismissed them with a present to each of them, of three rich suits of raiment, two talents of gold, the value of one talent in cups; couches to sit and eat upon, with presents likewise for the high-priest, of ten beds with silver feet and suits of furniture belonging to them; a chalice of thirty talents, ten purple robes, a glorious crown and a hundred pieces of fine linen, besides cups and goblets of several sorts, and two golden vessels, dedicated to the service of the temple; desiring the high-priest by letter, that if any of those commissioners should be disposed to revisit him in any future time. he would grant them his permission, as he had a high esteem for the conversation of learned men, and could not think his favour better bestowed than upon so venerable a body.§

† Two Egyptian talents, for such we suppose to be here meant, in gold is worth seven thousand

be life in the statues, in the statues, the statues of second pounds English money.

§ Before we dismiss Ptolemy Philadelphus, whose connection with this history terminates here, we shall subjoin a few particulars relating to his death. As Ptolemy was curious, to an uncommon degree, in the statues, designs, and pictures, of excellent masters, as well as in books; he

saw, during the time he continued in Syria, a statue of Diana, in one of the temples, with which he was highly pleased. Antigonus made him a present of it, at his request, and he carried it into Egypt. Some time after his return, Arsinoe was seized with an indisposition, and dreamed that Diana appeared to her, and acquainted her, that Ptolemy was the occasion of her illness, by his having taken her statue out of the temple where it was consecrated to her divinity. Upon this the statue was sent back, as soon as possible, to Syria, in order to be replaced in the proper temple. It was also accompanied with rich presents to the goddess, and a variety of sacrifices were offered up to appease her displeasure; but they were not succeeded by any favourable effect. The queen's distemper was so far from abating, that she died in a short time, and left Ptolemy inconsolable at her loss; and more so, because he imputed her death to his own indiscretion, in having removed the statue of Diana out of the

temple. Nothing could be more extraordinary

CHAPTER III

Various instances of respect from the most potent princes of the East towards the Jews. -Their cause espoused by the Romans.-Their various fortunes .- Joseph, the son of Onias, distinguishes himself on divers accounts, and brings his countrymen the Jews into great repute and estimation.

THE Jews were in great esteem among the kings of Asia, both for their fidelity and skill in military affairs, insomuch that Seleucus,* surnamed Nicator or Victori-

than the design he formed of erecting a temple to Arsinoe, at Alexandria, with a dome rising above it, the concave part of which was to be lined with adamant, in order to keep an iron statue of the queen suspended in the air. This design was the invention of Dinocrates, a famous architect in those times; and the moment he proposed it to Ptolemy, that prince gave orders for beginning the work without delay. The experiment, however, remained imperfect, for want of sufficient time; for Ptolemy and the architect dying within a very short time after this resolution, the project was entirely discontinued. It has been said, and even believed, that the body of Mahomet was suspended in this manner, in an iron coffin, by a loadstone fixed in the vaulted roof of the chamber where his corpse was deposited after his death; but this is a mere vulgar error, without the least foundation. After the death of his beloved wife Arsinoe, Ptolemy did not long survive her: for, being of a tender constitution himself, and having farther weakened it by a luxurious indulgence, he could not bear the approach of age, or the grief of mind, which he fell under on this occasion; but, sinking under these burdens, he died, in the sixty-third year of his life, after he had reigned in Egypt 38 years. As he was a learned prince himself, and a great patron of learning, many of those who were eminent for any part of literature, resorted to him from all parts, and partook of his favour and bounty. Seven celebrated poets of that age are said to have lived at his court; four of which, viz. Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron, and Aratus, have their works still remaining; and, among these, the first of them has a whole Idyllium, and the second, part of two hymns, written in his praise. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, dedicated his history to him; and Zoilus, the snarling critic, came also to his court. But how great soever his wit was, he could never recommend himself to king Ptolemy, who hated him for the bitterness and ill nature of it: and, for the same reason, having drawn on himself the odium and aversion of all men, he at length died miserably; for some say that he was stoned, others, that he was burned to death, and others again, that he was crucified by king Ptolemy, for a crime that deserved that punishment.—Prideaux's Connection, and Rollin's Ancient History.

ous, gave them the privileges of freemen in all the cities he built throughout Asia and the lower Syria, and even in Antioch,†

captains of Alexander the Great. After the king's death he received Babylon as his province; but his ambitious views, and his attempt to destroy Eumenus as he passed through his territories, rendered him so unpopular, that he fled for safety to the court of his friend Ptolemy, king of Egypt. He was soon after enabled to recover Babylon, which Antigonus had seized in his absence, and he increased his dominions by the immediate conquest of Media and some of the neighbouring provinces. When he had strengthened himself in his empire, Seleucus imitated the example of the rest of the generals of Alexander, and assumed the title of independent monarch. He afterwards made war against Antigonus, with the united forces of Ptolemy, Cassander, and Lysimachus; and after this monarch had been conquered and slain, his territories were divided among his victorious enemies. When Seleucus became master of Syria, he built a city there, which he called Antioch, in honour of his father, and made it the capital of his dominions. He also made war against Demetrius and Lysimachus, though he had originally married Stratonice, the daughter of the former, and had lived in the closest friendship and amity with the latter. Seleucus was at last murdered by one of his domestics, called Ptolemy Ceraunus, a man on whom he bestowed the greatest favours, and whom he had distinguished by acts of the most unbounded liberality. According to Arrian, Seleucus was the greatest and most powerful of the princes who inherited the Macedonian empire after the death of Alexander. His benevo-lence has been commended; and it has been observed, that he conquered, not to enslave nations, but to make them more happy. He founded no less than 34 cities, in different parts of his empire, which he peopled with Greek colonies, whose national industry, learning, religion, and spirit, were communicated to the indolent and luxurious inhabitants of Asia. Seleucus was a great benefactor to the Greeks; he restored to the Athenians the library and the statues which Xerxes had carried away from their city when he invaded Greece, and among them were those of Harmodius and Aristogin. Seleucus was murdered 280 years before the Christian era, in the 32d year of his reign, and the 78th, or according to others, the 73d of his age, as he was going to conquer Macedonia, where he intended to finish his days in peace and tranquillity in that province where he was born.-Lem-

+ This Syrian city, situated on the banks of the river Orontes, about twenty miles from the place where it falls into the Mediterranean, was built by Seleucus Nicator, three hundred years before the birth of Christ. It was called Antioch, in honour of Antiochus, the father of Seleucus, and soon became the metropolis of his kingdom, and the usual residence of the Macedonian princes. Seleucus built, in the same country, the city Seleucia, named from himself; Apamea, from his * Seleucus, son of Antiochus, was one of the wife Apamea; Laodicea, from his mother Laodice,

and pleasure that they should enjoy the foreign oil, the Olympic officers who had same rights and immunities with the the ordering of that affair, were obliged Greeks and Macedonians. As for exam-

the metropolis, declaring it to be his will | ple, the Jews being interdicted the use of by the government to allow them so much

and these three, together with Antioch, gave to that quarter of Syria the name of Tetrapolis, or the country of the four cities. The same name was afterwards given by Strabo to Antioch itself, because it consisted of four distinct divisions, built at different times, each surrounded with its own wall, but all inclosed by one common line of Daphne, which is mentioned in the history of the Maccabees, and which stood about five miles from Antioch, was reckoued one of the suburbs of that city. Here Seleucus planted a grove, about ten miles in circumference; erected a temple in the centre of it to Apollo and Diana; and consecrated the whole as an asylum or sanctuary. To this place the inhabitants of Antioch were accustomed to resort for amusement, as the Romans did to Baiæ, and the Alexandrians to Canopus; but, in process of time, it was so much frequented by the votaries of Venus and Bacchus, rather than of Apollo and Diana, that it was avoided as infamous by all who had any regard to their reputation; and, at length, Daphnicis moribus vivere, 'to live after the manner of Daphne' became a proverbial expression to denote the most dissolute course of life. It was indeed the general characteristic of the inhabitants of Antioch, in almost every period of their history, to live after this manner: and to this their voluptuous disposition may be ascribed many of the numerous calamities which befell this celebrated city. About one hundred and forty-five years before Christ, the inhabitants of Antioch were so exasperated by the licentious and tyrannical conduct of their sovereign, Demetrius Nicator, that he applied to Jonathan, one of the Maccabees, for three thousand men, to keep his subjects in awe, and to compel them to deliver up their arms. This violent measure caused a general insurrection in the city. The citizens ran to arms, and, to the number of one hundred and twenty thousand, surrounded the palace of their prince. All the Jews in Antioch hastened to his relief, dispersed the insurgents with fire and sword, burnt great part of the city, killed one hun-dred thousand of the inhabitants, and compelled the rest to submit, and sue for pardon. A pardon was granted; but nevertheless their tyrannical prince afterwards put many of them to death, confiscated their estates, and subjected them to every species of cruelty and oppression. Upon the reduction of Syria by the Romans, Antioch fell under their dominion; was besieged by the Parthians, after the defeat of Crassus, about fifty years before Christ; and was one of the cities which declared for Cæsar against Pompey. In the year of our Lord 115, it was almost completely destroyed by a dreadful earthquake, which continued for several days and nights. The emperor Trajan, accompanied by numerous embassies, by a large army, and by crowds of strangers from every narter, was in the city of Antioch during this season of destruction. Such a concourse of peo-

ple from other places, added to the confusion of the scene, increased the number of the sufferers, and extended the calamity to distant countries.
"The whole Roman world," says D. Cassius,
"suffered in one city;" and it is represented by
Eusebius, Aurelius Victor, and Evagrius, as one of the most calamitous events recorded in history. In the year 155, it was in great part consumed by fire, but was soon restored to its former grandeur, by the care and munificence of the emperor Antoninus. In 178, the inhabitants of Antioch having taken part in the revolt of Avidius Cassius, the emperor Aurelius deprived them of their privileges, suppressed their public assemblies, and prohibited their shows and spectacles; but was soon induced to revoke his edict, and to restore their liberties. In 195, they were again degraded by Septimius Severus, for having sided with Pescennius Niger, and were subjected, as a mere village, to the jurisdiction of Laodicea; but afterwards, at the intercession of his son, he restored their rights, upon condition of their supplying him with four times the sum which they had contributed to Niger. When the Roman power began to decline, Antioch suffered more than any other city in the empire, from the incursions of the eastern nations. In 242, 253, and 261, it was repeatedly taken and pillaged by Sapor, king of Persia. In 333, it was afflicted with so severe a famine, that a bushel of wheat was sold for four hundred pieces of silver; but was relieved by Constantine I., who sent to the bishop thirty thousand bushels of corn, with an immense quantity of other provisions. In 362, while the emperor Julian was residing at Antioch, and preparing an expedition against the Persians, that city was again greatly distressed by famine. The ill-judged attempts of the emperor to remedy this evil, his endeavours to re-establish the Pagan worship in the grove of Daphne, and his general character as an enemy to Christianity, excited, in the luxurious and turbulent capital of Syria, the most seditious murmurs and insolent satires against his person and conduct. Julian contented him-self with composing, in his turn, under the title of Misopogon, or the enemy of the beard, a satirical invective against the licentious and effeminate manners of Antioch. At this period, indeed, the inhabitants of this city seem to have attained the highest extremity of luxury and dissipation. "Fashion," says Gibbon, "was the only law, pleasure the only pursuit, and the splendour of dress and furniture was the only distinction of the citizens of Antioch. The arts of luxury were honoured; the serious and manly virtues were the subject of ridicule; and the contempt for female modesty and reverent age announced the universal corruption of the capital of the East. The love of spectacles was the taste, or rather passion, of the Syrians; a considerable share of the revenue was devoted to the public amusements; and the magnificence of the games was considered as the

money in lieu of it. The people of Antioch insisted upon the abrogating of that custom the following war, but Mutianus, who was then governor of the province of Syria, would not suffer it.

happiness and the glory of Antioch." In 384, it was desolated by a famine and pestilence, which gave occasion to great disturbances, and in 387, its inhabitants, amounting to about half a million, had nearly occasioned, by their riotous proceedings, the complete destruction of their city. They resisted the edicts of taxation issued by Theodosius the Great: derided and defied their rulers; threw down the statues of the imperial family; and treated these representations of majesty with the most outrageous contempt. The emperor had resolved, in the first moments of resentment, to level the offending city with the ground, and to massacre the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex. Multitudes sought a refuge in the adjacen't mountains and deserts; the noblest and wealthiest of the citizens were assembled, in chains, before the public tribunals, to receive their sentence; a bloody execution was every moment expected to commence; and after a long and awful suspense, which Chrysostom has represented as a lively image of the last judgment of the world, a free and general pardon was obtained, by the intercession of Flavian, their bishop, and of Hilarius, one of the most eminent of their senators. In 395, Rufinus, præfect of the East, under Arcadius, exasperated the inhabitants of Antioch to such a degree, by scourging to death their governor Lucianus, that, in order to appease their fury, he ordered a magnificent portico to be built in the city, which was deemed the most stately edifice in all Syria. In 438, the empress Eudocia, on her way to Jerusalem, passed through Antioch; pronounced a speech in praise of the city, in presence of the senate and the people; and presented the magistrates with a considerable sum of money, for the relief of the indigent citizens. The inhabitants expressed their gratitude by erecting two statues in honour of their benefactress. In 447, 458, 525, it suffered greatly from earthquakes; many of its finest buildings were overturned; and great num-Rebuilt by the bers of its inhabitants perished. emperor Justin, and recovering from its calamities, it was, in 540, taken by Costhoes, king of Persia, and given up to be plundered by his soldiers. It was completely stripped of its wealth and ornaments; its noble buildings were laid in ashes; and its inhabitants were either put to the sword, or carried away into captivity. In 590 it was deso-lated by an earthquake, which destroyed thirty thousand of its inhabitants; and in 614 it was again taken by the Persians, under Cosrhoes II. In 638 it fell into the hands of the Saracens, and was compelled to pay three hundred thousand pieces of gold. At this period, notwithstanding all its calamities, it was more than twelve miles in circumference, and contained such a profusion of delights, that the Saracen commander would not permit his troops to remain in it above three days. In 713, however, and in 859, it was almost comIn the reign of Vespasian, and his son Titus,* the people of Alexandria would have had the Jews disfranchised: but such was the honour and justice of the Romans, and especially of those two magnani-

pletely ruined by repeated earthquakes; and in 958, after having been frequently attacked by the emperor Nicephorus, it was taken by his general Burtzas. In 969, 974, 977, 1075, it was occupied by the Turks and the Greeks. In 1098, after a siege of eight months, it fell into the hands of the crusaders, under Baldwin duke of Normandy; and in 1262, after having stood as queen of the East for almost one thousand six hundred years, it was finally taken, and completely overthrown, by Bibaris, the sultan of Egypt. Under the reign of the emperor Theodosius the Great, when paganism was proscribed by law, there were, as Mr Gibbon tells us, one hundred thousand persons in Antioch, who professed the Christian faith, though that was only one-fifth of its whole population. Modern Antioch, called by the Arabs Anthakia, is situated thirty miles south of Scanderoon, forty south-west of Aleppo, and twenty east of the Mediterranean. It is described by Volney as now no more than a ruinous town, with houses built of mud and straw, and with narrow miry streets, presenting nothing that can interest the mind, but exhibiting every appearance of misery and wretchedness. It stands on the southern bank of the Orontes, which is now called El-aasi, or the rebel, at the extremity of an old decayed bridge, where the breadth of the river is not above forty paces. The surrounding soil, though excellent, is almost wholly uncultivated, except a few plantations of figs, olives, vines, and mulberry trees .- Jones' Bibl. Cycl.

* These illustrious Roman emperors, celebrated for conducting the famous but ruinous siege of Jerusalem, during the times of Josephus, demand a brief notice here. Vespasian, the father of Titus, accompanied Nero into Greece, but he offended the prince by falling asleep while he repeated one of his poetical compositions. This momentary resentment of the emperor did not prevent Vespasian from being sent to carry on a war against the Jews. His operations were crowned with success; many of the cities of Palestine surrendered and Vespasian began the siege of Jerusalem, This was, however, achieved by the hands of his son Titus, and the death of Vitellius, and the affection of his soldiers, hastened his rise, and he was proclaimed emperor at Alexandria. choice of the army was approved by every pro-vince of the empire; but Vespasian did not betray any signs of pride at so sudden and so unexpected an exaltation, and though once employed in the mean office of a horse-doctor, he behaved, when invested with the imperial purple, with all the dignity and greatness which became the successor of Augustus. In the beginning of his reign, Vespasian attempted to reform the manners of the Romans, and he took away an appointment which he had a few days before granted to a young noble-man, who approached him to return him thanks, all smelling of perfumes and covered with ointmous princes before mentioned, that they noved them by a troublesome war, and could not obtain it, not that they wanted either pretence or provocation for a revenge upon a people who had long an-

ment, adding, 'I had rather you had smelt of gar-lic.' He repaired the public buildings, embellished the city, and made the great roads more spacious and convenient. After he had reigned with great popularity for ten years, Vespasian died with a pain in his bowels, A. D. 79, in the 70th year of his age. He was the first Roman emperor that died a natural death, and he was also the first who was succeeded by his own son on the throne. Vespasian has been admired for his great virtues. He was clement, he gave no ear to flattery, and for a long time refused the title of father of his country, which was often bestowed on the most worthless and tyrannical of the emperors. He despised informers, and rather than punish conspirators, he rewarded them with great liberality. His ministers were the most avari-cious of his subjects, and the emperor used very properly to remark, that he treated them as sponges, by wetting them when dry, and squeezing them when they were wet.—Titus Vespasianus, son of Vespa-sian and Flavia Domitilla, became known by his valour in the Roman armies, particularly at the siege of Jerusalem. In the 79th year of the Christian era, he was invested with the imperial purple, and the Roman people had every reason to expect in him the barbarities of a Tiberius, and the debaucheries of a Nero. While in the house of Vespasian, Titus had been distinguished for his extravagance and incontinence; his attendants were the most abandoned and dissolute, and it seemed that he wished to be superior to the rest of the world in the gratification of every impure desire, and in every unnatural vice. From such a private character, which still might be curbed by the authority and example of a father, what could be expected but tyranny and oppression? Yet Titus became a model of virtue, and in an age and office in which others wish to gratify all their appetites, the emperor abandoned all his usual profligacy, he forgot his debaucheries, and Berenice, whom he had loved with uncommon ardour, even to render himself despised by the Roman people, was dismissed from his presence. When raised to the throne, he thought himself bound to be the father of his people, the guardian of virtue, and the patron of liberty; and Titus is perhaps the only monarch who, when invested with uncontrollable power, bade adieu to those vices, luxuries, and indulgences, which, as a private man, he never ceased to gratify. He was moderate in his entertainments, and though he often refused the donations which were due to sovereignty, no emperor was ever more generous and more magnificent than Titus. All informers were banished from his presence, and even severely punished. A reform was made in the judicial proceedings, and trials were no longer permitted to be postponed for years. The public edifices were repaired, and baths were erected for the convenience of the people. To do good to his subjects was the ambition of Titus; and it was at the recollection that ne had done no service, or granted no favour one

so obstinate a rebellion, but they looked upon their rites and privileges to be still sacred; and therefore refused to gratify either their own passions, or the importunity of two great nations with any vindictive act of injustice.

They laid more weight upon the sense of their ancient merits than upon that of their present misdemeanor, and would not do a mean thing to promote the most considerable interest.

They observed, that those who had taken up arms against the Romans had suffered enough by the calamities of war, without any other forfeiture; and that to punish those who had not offended, would be offering violence to common sense and justice.*

day, that he exclaimed in the memorable words, 'My friends, I have lost a day!' A continua! wish to be benevolent and kind, made him popular. and it will not be wondered, that he who could say that he had rather die himself, than be the cause of the destruction of one of his subjects, was called the love and delight of mankind. Two of the senators conspired against his life, but the em-peror disregarded their attempts; he made them his friends by kindness, and like another Nerva, presented them with a sword to destroy him. During his reign, Rome was three days on fire, the towns of Campania were destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius, and the empire was visited by a pestilence which carried away an infinite number of inhabitants. In this time of public calamity, the emper-or's benevolence and philanthropy were conspicu-ous. Titus comforted the afflicted as a father, he alleviated their distresses by his liberal bounties, and, as if they were but one family, he exerted himself for the good and preservation of the whole. The Romans, however, had not long to enjoy the favours of a magnificent prince; Titus was taken ill, and as he retired into the country of the Sabines to his father's house, his indisposition was increased by a burning fever. He lifted his eyes to heaven, and with modest submission complained of the severity of fate which removed him from the world when young, where he had been employed in making a grateful people happy. He died A.D. 81, in the 41st year of his age, after a reign of two years, two months and 20 days. The news of his death was received with lamentations; Rome was filled with tears, and all looked upon themselves as deprived of the most benevolent of fathers .-

Lempricre.

* We read likewise to the same purpose of Marcus Agrippa's good affection to the Jews, for when the Ionians, in a seditious animosity against those people went to them with a remonstrance, that their city being singly and entirely their own, by

Great, Asia, Judea, and Cœlo-syria, were involved in perpetual broils; for Antiochus being at that time in actual hostility with Ptolemy Philopater, and his son Ptolemy, surnamed Epiphanes, or Illustrious, the Jews, between the prosperous and adverse fortune of Antiochus, were still sure to be sufferers, though Antiochus in the end prevailed, and made himself master of Judea.

In process of time, after the death of Philopater,* his son sent a great army

the gift of Antiochus the grandson of Seleucus, whom the Grecians surnamed the god, they desired to be put in possession of it with peculiar privi-leges, exclusive of all other people; demanding farther, that if the Jews should pretend to the same immunities, it might be upon condition of their worshipping the same God. The Jews brought the question to an issue, Nicholaus of Damascus being of their council, who obtained judgment for them in favour of the right they claimed to the free exercise and enjoyment of their own laws and customs; Agrippa pronouncing upon the whole matter, that he could not agree to any innovation upon that point. Those who would be farther satisfied in the series of this transaction, may read the whole story at large in Nicholaus's history, book 123, 124.

* He received the surname of Philopater by antiphrasis, because, according to some historians, he destroyed his father by poison. He began his reign with acts of the greatest cruelty, and he successfully sacrificed to his avarice his own mother, his wife, his sister, and his brother. He received the name of Tiphon, from his extravagance and de-bauchery, and that of Gallus, because he appeared in the streets of Alexandria, like one of the Bacchanals, and with all the gestures of the priests In the midst of his pleasures, Philopater was called to war against Antiochus king of Syria, and at the head of a powerful army he soon invaded his enemies territories, and might have added the kingdom of Syria to Egypt, if he had made a prudent use of the victories which attended his arms. In his return he visited Jerusalem, but the Jews prevented him forcibly from entering their temple, for which insolence to his majesty the monarch determined to extirpate the whole nation. He ordered an immense number of Jews to be exposed in a plain, and trodden under the feet of elephants, but by a supernatural instinct, the generous animals turned their fury, not on those that had been devoted to death, but upon the Egyptian spectators. This circumstance terrified Philopater, and he behaved with more than common kindness to a nation which he had so lately devoted to destruction. In the latter part of his reign, the Romans, whom a dangerous war with Carthage had wakened and rendered active, renewed, for political reasons, the treaty of alliance

Under the reign of Antiochus the into Cœlo-syria, under the command of Scopas, who took a number of cities, among which was that of Jerusalem. Yet it was not long afterwards, when Antiochus overcame Scopas, in a battle fought at the head of the river Jordan, and recovered the places in Coelo-syria and Samaria which Scopas had got possession of before.

> The Jews upon this success surrendered themselves to Antiochus, received the army into the city, provided plentifully for the elephants, and valiantly assisted in the attack of the castle, where Scopas had left a body of men in garrison.

> Antiochus thought it but reasonable to gratify the Jews with some honourable token of the sense he had of their good-will and services upon this occasion, and therefore wrote to such of his friends and officers as were witnesses of the obligations they had laid upon him; giving them to understand in the said letters, what kind of requital he intended to make them.

> As a proof of the esteem which Antiochus retained for the Jewish nation, we deem it necessary to insert the following

> "King Antiochus to Ptolemy, greeting .- Whereas we have received several instances of the good disposition and affection of the Jews toward us and our service, from the time of our first coming into their country, which they have expressed by their magnificence, and the respect shown by their elders and magistrates, in attending us upon the way, the splendid reception of our person and army into the city, and the ample provision they made both for our horses and elephants, assisting us likewise against the garrison of the Egyptians in the castle:

> which had been made with the Egyptian monarchs. Philopater at last, weakened and enervated by intemperance and continual debauchery, died in the thirty-seventh year of his age, after a reign of seventeen years, 234 years before the Chris-tian era. His death was immediately followed by the murder of the companions of his voluptuousness and extravagance, and their carcases were dragged with the greatest ignominy through the streets of Alexandria.- Lempriere

these good offices being duly considered, we deem ourselves bound in honour to bestow upon them some distinguishing marks of our esteem, by contributing toward the repairing of their city, and restoring it to its former state of magnificence and glory, by recalling all their countrymen, wherever distressed, to their former habitations. In order to the accomplishment of these ends, we have in the first place assigned twenty thousand pieces of silver towards the charges of their sacrifices, for wine, oil, and frankincense; and for fine flour, according to the custom of the place, one thousand four hundred and sixty measures of wheat, and three hundred seventy-five measures of salt. farther, it is our will and pleasure, that all this may be made good according to our order. And then for any thing that may be wanted toward the repairing of the temple, porch, or galleries, it is our desire, that the timber be supplied, whether from Judea, Libanus, or any other place, without any tax or duty. And we do also grant the same immunity for other materials that may be made use of for the holy temple, with permission, moreover, of a universal liberty to live and govern themselves according to the laws of their country. And we do hereby respectively discharge their elders, priests, scribes, and sacred singers, of poll-taxes, royal duties, and of all other tributes whatsoever. And for a farther encouragement to the speedy repeopling of the city, we do by our royal authority grant unto all the inhabitants of the same, and to such others as may come to reside there at any time between this and the month of Hyperberetæus next ensuing, a total exemption from all public impositions for the space of three years to come; and so likewise from that time forward, an abatement of one third part of all taxes, in consideration of their past damages and sufferings. finally, whereas great numbers of those people have been carried away captive, and remain to this day in bondage, we do

farther command that they be forthwith set at liberty, with ample restitution for what had been taken from them."

Nor did this benevolent prince stop here, but followed his generous declaration in favour of the people with another edict, which he caused to be published all over his dominions, in substance as follows: "That no stranger shall presume to enter into the temple, but with the consent of the Jews, and without being purified and qualified before his admittance, according to the laws of the country: that no man shall dare to bring into the city, the flesh either of horses or mules, or of asses wild or tame; the flesh of panthers, foxes, hares, or of any other creatures that the Jews are not allowed so much as to touch the skins of any of them; nor to bring up, or feed any of these or any other creatures in the city, but such as their forefathers, according to God's appointment, made use of for sacrifices, upon the penalty of three thousand drachmas, to be levied upon every offender against the said orders, for the use and benefit of the priests."

This king also, upon another eminent occasion, gave the world a signal proof of the high esteem he had for the Jews.

Upon the breaking out of a commotion in Phrygia* and Lydia, Zeuxes at the

^{*} Phrygia is generally divided into Phrygia Major and Minor. Its boundaries are not properly or accurately defined by ancient authors, though it appears that it was situated between Bithynia, Lydia, Cappadocia, and Caria. It received its name from the Bryges, a nation of Thrace, or Macedonia, who came to settle there, and from their name, by corruption, arose the word Phrygia. Cybele was the chief deity of the country, and her festivals were observed with the greatest solemnity. The invention of the pipe of reeds, and of all sorts of needlework, is attributed to the inhabitants, who are represented by some authors as stubborn, imprudent, effeminate, servile, and voluptnous.- Lydia was a celebrated kingdom of Asia Minor, whose boundaries were different at different times. It was at first bounded by Mysia Major, Caria, Phrygia Major, and Ionia; but in its more flourishing times, it contained the whole country which lies between the Halys and the Ægean sea. It was anciently called Mæonia, and received the name of Lydia from Lydus, one of its kings. There were three different races that

time commanding an army in the upland lance of themselves and their families; by provinces, the king presently ordered this general, a person for whom he had a singular respect, to send away from Babylon such a number of the Jews there, into Phrygia, giving him instructions in a letter to this effect:

"The king Antiochus to Zeuxis, his friend and father, greeting.-Whereas I am given to understand, that there are several persons who strive to raise seditions and make innovations in Phrygia and Lydia, it behoves me to provide against such casualties; so that I am now to acquaint you that I am advised by my friends, to take two thousand Jewish families out of Babylon and Mesopotamia, and to transport them into Phrygia, with their goods and whatever belongs to them, and there to place them for a guard in strong-holds and garrisons, being thoroughly persuaded of their zeal and fidelity; not only from the principles of their religion, but from the proof and experience of their allegiance to my ancestors. Wherefore, it is my pleasure that they be forthwith transplanted; giving them all assurance, that they shall still enjoy the freedom of their own laws and customs. Upon their arrival there, you are to assign them lands and possessions, with all conveniences for building, planting, and tillage; with an immunity also from all taxes and contributions, out of the profits for ten years to come. In the meanwhile, till they may be able to support themselves out of the fruits of their own industry, you are to allow them a competent provision of wheat, for the mainten-

reigned in Lydia, the Atyadæ, Heraclidæ, and Mermnadæ. The history of the first is obscure and fabulous; the Heraclidæ began to reign about the Trojan war, and the crown remained in their family for about 505 years, and was always transmitted from father to son. «Candaules was the last of the Heraclidæ; and Gyges the first, and Crossus the last, of the Mermnadæ. The Lydians were great warriors in the reign of the Mermnadæ. They invented the art of coining gold and silver, and were the first who exhibited public sports, &c .- Lempriere.

which kind usage they will be encouraged to act more cheerfully in our service. You are finally to take care, that they be not exposed to any sort of trouble or molestation."

This is to show what esteem Antiochus the Great* had for the Jews; after which, there followed a league of amity and alliance between this king and Ptolemy, upon the latter's marriage with Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus, who had in lien of a portion, Cœlo-syria, Phœnicia, Judea, and Samaria. The revenue was divided between the two kings, and farmed to some of the principal men in the respective provinces, who took care of the collections, and paid their proportions into the king's treasury, according to the

The Samaritans were at this time haughty and powerful, and particularly troublesome in their inroads upon the Jews, carrying several of them away captives; and this ravage was committed chiefly in the time of the high-priest Onias: for after the death of Eleazar, his uncle

^{*} He was brother to Seleucus Ceraunus, and reigned over Syria thirty-six years. After the death of Ptolemy Philopater, he endeavoured to crush his infant son Epiphanes; but his guardians solicited the aid of the Romans, and Antiochus was compelled to resign his pretensions. He conquered the greatest part of Greece, of which some cities implored the aid of Rome; and Hannibal, who had taken refuge at his court, encouraged him to make war against Rome. He was glad to find himself supported by the abilities of such a general; but his measures were dilatory, and not agreeable to the advice of Hannibal, and he was conquered and obliged to retire beyond mount Taurus, and pay a yearly fine of 2000 talents to the Romans. His revenues being unable to pay the fine, he attempted to plunder the temple of Belus in Susiana, which so inceused the inhabitant that they billed him with his followers 187 ants, that they killed him with his followers, 187 years before the Christian era. In his character of king, Antiochus was humane and liberal, the patron of learning, and the friend of merit; and he published an edict, ordering his subjects never to obey except his commands were consistent with the laws of the country. He had three sons, Seleucus Philopater, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Demetrius. The first succeeded him, and the two others were kept as hostages by the Romans. -Lempriere.

Manasseh assumed the pontificate; and after his death, succeeded Onias, the son of Simon the just; which Simon was the brother of Eleazar.

This Onias was weak and covetous, to the excessive degree of refusing the king the customary tribute of twenty talents, which his ancestors had paid him, in acknowledgment of their allegiance. This behaviour of Onias incensed Ptolemy Euergetes, * the father of Philopater, to such a degree, that he sent an ambassador expressly to Jerusalem, with a menace to demand the payment of it, upon the peril of having an army quartered upon their country at discretion, and a new plantation settled there, if they did not immediately comply. This message gave the Jews most terrible apprehensions; but Onias braved the danger, his heart being wholly devoted to avarice and only set upon money.

Onias had a nephew, whose name was Joseph, the son of Tobias, who, though a young man, acquired great reputation among the Jews for his justice, and prudence, and integrity. Being on a certain occasion at Phicola, the place of his birth, his mother sent him an account of the messenger before-mentioned, and of his business, informing him that he had inveighed against Onias for endangering the public peace, and not attending to the interest and welfare of the people, to whom he stood indebted for his promotion, both sacerdotal and civil.

But, however, if his heart was so possessed by avarice, that he would sacrifice his country, friends and all, rather than part with his money, he advised him to make a dutiful application to the king about it, and to try if he could get the whole, or at least some part of it, remitted. Onias made answer, that he was not so fond of his place either in church or state, but he could willingly part with both, if it were permitted him, rather than go to the king upon that errand; and that for his part he would not concern himself in the matter.

Upon the refusal of Onias, Joseph asked permission to attend, and being granted his request, he went up to the temple, where he convened an assembly, and bade them take courage, for he was in hope that the failure of his uncle would have no further ill consequence; telling them, that if they thought fit, he would wait upon the king himself in their name, and do his utmost to reconcile matters between them. The whole multitude gave him thanks for the proposal, and left the business entirely to his management.

Joseph upon this went his way to find out the king's commissioner; and when he had treated him splendidly for some certain days, and made him rich presents, dismissed him to his master, with an assurance that he would presently follow him.

Joseph's heart was now set more and

^{*} This Ptolemy early engaged in a war against Antiochus Theus, for his unkindness to Berenice the Egyptian king's sister, whom he had married with the consent of Philadelphus. With the most rapid success he conquered Syria and Cilicia, and advanced as far as the Tigris, but a sedition at home stopped his progress, and he returned to Egypt loaded with the spoils of conquered nations. Among the immense riches which he brought he had above 2500 statues of the Egyptian gods, which Cambyses had carried away into Persia when he conquered Egypt. These were restored to the temples, and the Egyptians called their sovereign Euergetes, in acknowledgment for his attention, beneficence, and religious zeal for the gods of his country. The last years of Ptolemy's reign were passed in peace, if we except the refusal of the Jews, as recorded above, to pay the tribute of twenty silver talents which their ancestors had always and the Fernician to the superior to the contract of the superior to the tors had always paid to the Egyptian monarchs. He also interested himself in the affairs of Greece, and assisted Cleomenes the Spartan king against the leaders of the Achæan league; but he had the mortification to see his ally defeated, and even a fugitive in Egypt. Euergetes died 221 years be-fore Christ, after a reign of twenty-five years, and, like his two illustrious predecessors, he was the patron of learning, and indeed he is the last of the Lagides who gained popularity among his subjects by clemency, moderation, and humanity, and who commanded respect even from his enemies, by valour, prudence, and reputation. It is said that he deposited fifteen talents in the hands of the Athenians to be permitted to translate the original manuscripts of Æschylus, Euripedes, and Sophocles.—Lempriere.

service he could do him; who made no nion, in his return to Alexandria. doubt at all, but that upon such an application Joseph might probably gain his point.

This person was greatly pleased with the address of the young man; and upon his return into Egypt, reflecting upon the ingratitude of Onias, he took care to speak greatly in commendation of Joseph, who had generously taken the office upon himself, to atone for the indolence and inattention of his uncle.

In short, this minister was so taken up with the subjects of Joseph's character, that the king and his wife Cleopatra were in a manner enamoured with him before they saw him.

Upon this occasion, Joseph sent to his friends in Samaria to take up money for his equipage; which in clothes, horses, carriages, plate, and other necessaries, amounted to twenty thousand drachmas.

He happened, in his journey to Alexandria, to fall into company with a train of the princes and nobility of Syria and Phœnicia, who were at that time on their way to the king, in order to treat with him about his revenue, according to a yearly custom of putting it up by way of auction to the highest bidder.

These great men ridiculed the contemptible appearance of Joseph and his retinue; but he proceeded on his way to Alexandria; and being there informed that the king was still at Memphis,* prosecuted

more upon the expedition, being not only his journey, and had the good fortune to encouraged and invited to it by the king's meet him sitting in his chariot with the messenger, but assured also of the best queen, and his particular confidant Athe-

> This Athenion was the person who carried the embassy to Jerusalem, and was so honourably treated by Joseph in that place. He therefore no sooner cast his eyes upon the Hebrew, than he informed the king that he was the very person of whom he had spoken so many excellent things at his return from Jerusalem.

Ptolemy upon this stopped and saluted him, and took him into his chariot: complaining upon the first greeting, how ill he had been used by Onias.

"Sir," said Joseph, by way of apology, "an old man is the second time a child. and I hope your majesty will impute nothing to Onias beyond that infirmity. But for the young men that are in their vigour of strength and understanding, I dare be answerable for it, that you shall not find any one of us wanting in his duty."

The king was so delighted with this instance of Joseph's discretion and respect. upon this first interview, that he gave orders immediately for lodging him in his own palace, and entertaining of him at his own table; which singular respect gave no small disgust to the envious Syrian noblemen, when they observed at Alexandria the honour that was done to Joseph.

The day of auction now arrived, when the several branches of the revenue were

^{*} This was a very famous city, and, till the time of the Ptolemies, who removed to Alexandria, the place of residence for the ancient kings of Egypt. It was cituated above the parting of the river Nile, where the Delta begins. Towards the south of this city stood the famous pyramids, two of which were esteemed the wonders of the world; and whose grandeur and heauty still astonish the modern traveller; and in this city, in one of its many beautiful temples, was fed the ox Apis, which Cambyses slew in contempt of the Egyptians worshipping it as a god. The kings of Egypt took great pleasure in adorning this city; and in all its beauty it continued till the Arabians made a

conquest of Egypt under the Caliph Omar. The general who took it built another city just by it, which was called Fustat, because his tent had been a long time set up in that place, and the Caliph's Fatamites, when they became masters of Egypt, added another to it, which is known to us at this day by the name of Grand Cairo. The Mameluke sultans, of the dynasty of the Carcassians, having afterwards built a strong fort on the eastern shore of the Nile, did by degrees annex a city to it, which came to be called the New Cairo, as what the Fatamites had built was called the Old: but it must be observed, that the ancient Memphis stood on the western shore of the Nile, whereas whatever the Arabians have there built, from time to time, is on the eastern shore of that river.-

to be put up, and the nobility of each respective province to bid for the purchase. At length they contracted for eight thousand talents upon the duties of Coelosyria, Phœnice, Judea, and Samaria,

Joseph blamed the contractors for undervaluing the composition, and offered to double the sum proposed. The king, pleased with the offer, and well-disposed toward Joseph, demanded of him what security he could give to the performance of his agreement?

Joseph replied, that he could give him the security of persons beyond all exception, and upon Ptolemy's bidding him name them, his answer was, that he doubted not, but his majesty and the queen would be mutually bound for his honesty. The king was so well satisfied with this ingenious answer, that he intrusted him with his revenue upon his own word without any other security.

This surprising preference of a stranger greatly chagrined the rest of the contractors, who were much displeased at being obliged to depart without their

errand.

Joseph, upon having so great a trust reposed in him, desired a guard of two thousand soldiers to support him in the collecting of the duty, in case of any opposition; which guard was granted him. And having thereupon borrowed five hundred talents of the king's friends in Alexandria, he went into Syria.

Upon his arrival at Askelon, and demanding the king's tribute, they not only refused him the money, but insolently reviled him, so that he presently caused his soldiers to take up twenty of the ringleaders; and having inflicted exemplary punishment upon them, he raised a thousand talents out of their forfeited estates, and sent the treasure to the king, with a particular account of what had been done.

Euergetes so highly approved of the wise and discreet conduct of Joseph, that he intrusted him after that to do what-This recent examever he thought fit.

ple of his severity upon the people of Askelon wrought so effectually upon the rest of the Syrians, that they set their gates open in all places to Joseph; and without any difficulty or scruple paid their taxes.

The inhabitants of Scythopolis, another city of Palestine, followed the example of Askelon, in obstinately refusing their customary impositions, and contemning the king's officers and authority; so that Joseph was forced to deal with the ringleaders there, as he had done before upon the like occasion, accounting it a point of wisdom to secure what they had got, and to make their country maintain itself.

At length, Joseph having done great honour to his country, and fully evinced his moderation, piety, and justice, paid the debt of nature, to the great regret of the Jews, for whose relief and welfare he had so eminently contributed.

He executed the commission of receiver of all public duties in Syria, Phœnice and Samaria, for the space of two and twenty

His uncle Onias died also about the same time, and his son Simon succeeded him to the priesthood; and upon his demise, was succeeded by his son, who was likewise named Onias.

CHAPTER IV.

The king of Lacedemon claims kindred with the Jews, and seeks alliance with Onias .- Various events befall the nation of the Jews .--Demolition of the temple-Apostasy of great numbers of the Jews.

On the accession of Onias, the son of Simon, to the pontificate, 'Areus, king of the Lacedemonians, sought the friendship and alliance of the Jews, in an embassy couched in the following terms:

"Areus, king of the Lacedemonians, to Onias, health .- Whereas there is come to our hand an ancient manuscript, setting forth the near affinity between our ancestors and yours, and the relation in which

we stand to the line of Abraham; it is return to Jerusalem, but kept himself still but reasonable for brethren so nearly allied, to do all good offices one toward another. This is therefore to offer you the command of any thing within our power to serve you, as we ourselves shall take the freedom in looking upon your concerns as our own, and joining in one common interest. You are to receive this letter from our trusty subject and servant Demoteles, written in a quarto page, and sealed with the figure of an eagle holding a dragon in her talons."

After the death of Joseph, the people broke out into mutinies and seditions, upon the quarrel of the sons that he had left behind him; the elder brother making war upon the younger; the major part of the people appearing also in favour of the former, and among the rest, Simon the high-priest, upon account of his relation.

His son Hyrcanus* did not think fit to

* The history of the birth of Hyrcanus, as recorded by Josephus, is somewhat remarkable; for he tells us that as Joseph's occasions, in his less advanced years, called him frequently to Alexandria, one night, while he was at supper with the king, he fell desperately in love with a beautiful damsel that danced before him; and not being able to master his inordinate passion, he communicated it to his brother Salimius, (who had accompanied him in his journey, and carried with him a daughter of his, with an intent to marry her at Alexandria,) and desired of him, if possible, to procure him the enjoyment of her; but as secretly as he could, because of the sin and shame that would attend such an act. Salimius promised that he would: but instead of that, he conveyed his own daughter into his bed, and the next morning as secretly conveyed her away, so that his brother never discovered the deceit. In this manner Joseph accompanied with her for several nights; till every time growing more and more enamoured, he made his complaint one day to his brother of his hard fate, who, by the laws of his religion, was forbidden to marry the woman that he loved, because she was an alien : whereupon the other discovered the whole matter to him, and how, instead of the admired dancer, he had put his daughter to bed to him, as thinking it more eligible to wrong his own child, than to suffer him to join himself to a strange woman, which their law expressly forbade. The surprisingness of this discovery, and the singular instance of his brother's kindness, so wrought upon Joseph's heart, that he immediately made the young woman his wife, and of her, the next year, was born this Hyrcanus.—Stackhouse and Millar.

beyond Jordan, where he maintained a perpetual war with the Arabians, killing great numbers of them, and carrying others into captivity. He caused a marvellous strong castle to be erected there; the walls, from the bottom to the top, being all of white stone, with figures upon them of several sorts of creatures, of an extraordinary size and proportion.

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This building was encompassed with a deep ditch, or moat, and vaults cut out through a mountain just opposite to it, of several furlongs in length, and only broad enough at the mouth for one man to enter at a time, which they did both for fear and security.

There were also in this castle places for entertainment and lodging; variety of fountains, both for pleasure and ornament; large courts, stately buildings, and spacious gardens; to this place thus elegantly completed he gave the name of Tyre, which lies upon the borders of Arabia and Judea beyond Jordan. Hyrcanus held this government for the space of seven years; during which Seleucus+ reigned in Syria. After his death his brother Antiochus, otherwise called Epiphanes, succeeded him, at which time died Ptolemy also, king of Egypt, who was likewise called Epiphanes. 1

+ He was surnamed Philopater, or, according to Josephus, Soter. His empire had been weakened by the Romans when he became monarch, and the yearly tribute of a thousand talents to these victorious enemies, concurred in lessening his power and consequence among nations. Seleucus was poisoned, after a reign of twelve years, B. C. 175.-Lempriere.

[†] He succeeded his father Philopater as king of Egypt, though only in the 4th year of his age. During the years of his minority he was under the protection of Sosicius and Aristomenes, by whose prudent administration Antiochus was dispossessed of the provinces of Cœlo-syria and Palestine, which he had conquered by war. The Romans also renewed their alliance with him after their victories over Hannibal, and the conclusion of the second Punic war. This flattering embassy induced Aristomenes to offer the care of the patronage of the young monarch to the Romans, but the regent was confirmed in his honourable office, and by making a treaty of alliance with the people

This Ptolemy left two sons behind him, both of them minors; the name of the elder was Philometor, and the name of the other Physcon. Antiochus was at that time very strong and powerful; insomuch, that Hyrcanus, for fear of being called to an account for his inroads upon the Arabians, laid violent hands upon himself, and Antiochus took possession of all his goods and estate.

Onias the high-priest dying about this time, Antiochus Epiphanes advanced his brother Jesus to the pontificate, his own son being at that time a minor. This Jesus fell under the king's displeasure, who deposed him from the pontificate, and transferred it afterward to Onias the younger brother. Now these were the three sons of Simon, and they all arrived to the dignity of the priesthood: but Jesus chose rather to take upon himself

of Achaia, he convinced the Egyptians he was qualified to wield the sceptre and to govern the nation. But now that Ptolemy had reached his fourteenth year, according to the laws and customs of Egypt, the years of his minority had ex-pired. He received the surname of Epiphanes, or illustrious, and was crowned at Alexandria with the greatest solemnity, and the faithful Aristomenes resigned into his hands an empire which he had governed with honour to himself, and with credit to his sovereign. Young Ptolemy was no sooner delivered from the shackles of a superior, than he betrayed the same vices which had characterized his father; the counsels of Aristomenes were despised, and the minister who for ten years had governed the kingdom with equity and moderation, was sacrificed to the caprice of the sovereign, who abhorred him for the salutary advice which his own vicious inclinations did not permit him to follow. His cruelties raised seditions among his subjects, but these were twice quelled by the prudence and the moderation of one Polycrates, the most faithful of his corrupt ministers. In the midst of his extravagance Epiphanes did not forget his alliance with the Romans; above all others he showed himself eager to cultivate friendship with a nation from whom he could derive so many advantages, and during their war against Antiochus he offered to assist them with money against a monarch, whose daughter Cleopatra he had married, but whom he hated on account of the seditions he had raised in the very heart of Egypt. After a reign of twenty-five years, one hundred and eighty years before Christ, Ptolemy was poisoned by his ministers, whom he had threatened to rob of their possessions, to carry on a war against Seleucus king of Syria.-Lemnriere.

This Ptolemy left two sons behind him, the name of Jason, as the other changed the of them minors: the name of the his name for Menelaus.

In this confused state of things, one brother advanced a faction against the other, and the people divided upon it. The son of Tobias sided with the new high-priest Menelaus; but the greater part of the multitude joined with Jason, and so much overpowered the other, that Menelaus and the sons of Tobias with. drew to Antioch, declaring themselves that they would no longer be tied up to their country's laws and institutions, but go over to the religion of their king, and the Greek way of worship: desiring liberty to erect a kind of academy, or place for public exercises in Jerusalem. Upon the obtaining of this license, they so disguised their bodies, that even naked, there was no visible difference between them and the Greeks, at the same time casting off all regard for the Jewish laws and customs, and betaking themselves to the manners of other nations.

Antiochus Epiphanes, finding himself at this time so easy at home, and his people so well settled, resolved to try an expedition into Egypt, partly from an ambition to make himself master of the country, and partly from a reliance on the weakness and inability of Ptolemy's sons to manage such a war; so that he advanced with a mighty army to Pelusium, where he circumvented Philometor* by

^{*} He succeeded his father Epiphanes on the Egyptian throne, and received by antiphrasis the name of Philometor, on account of his hatred against his mother Cleopatra. He was in the sixth year of his age when he ascended the throne, and during his minority the kingdom was governed by his mother, and at her death by an eunuch who was one of his favourites. He made war against Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, to recover the provinces of Palestine and Cœlo-syria, which were part of the Egyptian dominions, and after several successes he fell into the hands of his enemy, who detained him in confinement. During the captivity of Philometor, the Egyptians raised to the throne his younger brother Ptolemy Euergetes, or Physcon, also son of Epiphanes, but he was no sooner established in his power than Antiochus turned his arms against Egypt, drove out the usurper, and restored Philometor to all his rights and privileges as king of Egypt.

craft, and advanced into Egypt, and from | he made in the town, where he exercised thence to Memphis and other neighbouring places which he likewise reduced; and then proceeded to Alexandria, with a design to reduce at once both the king and the city; but upon the peremptory command of the Romans to withdraw his army immediately at his peril, he gave over his design, and relinquishing what he had taken, returned to his own country.

Antiochus at his return from Egypt, from whence he was affrighted by the menaces of the Romans, marched with his army to Jerusalem, and entered the city in the hundred and forty third year from the time that the kingdom of Syria fell into the family of Seleucus.

He made himself master of it without any difficulty; for the gates were set open to him by the treachery of a party

This artful behaviour of Antiochus was soon comprehended by Philometor, and when he saw that Pelusium, the key of Egypt, had remained in the hands of his Syrian ally, he recalled his brother Physicon, and made him partner on the throne, and concerted with him how to repel their common enemy. This union of interest in the two royal brothers incensed Antiochus; he entered Egypt with a large army, but the Romans checked his progress, and obliged him to retire. No sooner were they delivered from the impending war than Philometor and Physicon, whom the fear of danger had united, began with mutual jealousy to oppose each other's views. Physcon was at last banished by the superior power of his brother, and as he could find no support in Egypt, he immediately repaired to Rome. To excite more effectually the compassion of the Romans, and to gain their assistance, he appeared in the meanest dress, and took his residence in the most obscure corner of the city. He received an audience from the senate, and the Romans settled the dispute between the two royal brothers, by making them independent of one another, and giving the govern-ment of Libya and Cyrene to Physcon, and con-firming Philometor in the possession of Egypt, and the island of Cyprus. These terms of accom-modation were gladly accepted, but Physcon soon claimed the dominion of Cyprus, and in this he was supported by the Romans, who wished to aggrandize themselves by the diminution of the Egyptian power. Philometor refused to deliver up the island of Cyprus, and to call away his brother's attention he fomented the seeds of rebel-lion in Cyrene. But the death of Philometor 145 years before the Christian era, left Physcon master of Egypt, and all the dependent provinces. Philometor has been commended by some historians for his clemency and moderation .- Lem-

great cruelty, and put many people to the sword, without regard to sex or age, pillaged the city and carried the treasure away to Antioch.

This calamity happened in the second year after the taking of the city, in the hundred and fortieth year from the first Seleucus. In this furious outrage, they did not spare even those who quietly opened the gates to them, for the greater liberty of breaking in upon the riches of the temple, where the spoil was so considerable, that the value; they thought, might in some degree atone for the treachery.

In short, the temple was wholly stripped and rifled, all the holy vessels and utensils were taken away; nay, the very hiding-places, where they concealed an immense treasure, were laid open, and not so much as any relics left of this prodigious wealth.* And farther, to consummate the misery of these poor people, daily sacrifices were forbidden, the city levelled with the ground, the inhabitants partly killed, partly carried away captives, together with their wives and children, to the number of ten thousand, their walls demolished, and their stately edifices consumed by fire.

He erected a towerf in the city, that overlooked and commanded the temple it-

^{*} In the East, where revolutions are frequent, it is extremely common to hide treasures in the ground; and it is usual for conquerors to carry with them persons, reputed sorcerers, whose office it is to find concealed treasures. Thus, says Sir J. Chardin, at Surat, when Siragi came there, there were persons, who, with a stick striking on the ground or against walls, found out those that had been hollowed or dug up, and ordered such places to be opened .- Harmer.

⁺ This citadel, of which we have such frequent mention, both in the Maccabees and Josephus, seems to have been a castle built on a hill, lower than mount Zion, though upon its skirts, and higher than mount Moriah, but between them both: which hill the enemies of the Jews now got possession of, and built upon it this citadel, and fortified it, till a good while afterwards the Jews regained it, demolished it, and levelled the hill itself with the common ground; that their enemies might no more recover it, and thence overlook the temple itself, and do them such mischief as they had long undergone from it .- Whiston.

self; and when he had supplied and forti- | their bodies cut and torn with whips, and fied the place, put a strong garrison of Macedonians into it, but not without a mixture of execrable and apostate Jews, that were as malicious as the very worst of their enemies. He raised an altar in the temple, and sacrificed hogs upon it, in a most spiteful opposition to the laws and constitutions of the Jews. He forced all people to extremities who would not renounce the true God and worship his idols. And so in all other cities and towns, he built temples and altars for the daily sacrifice of swine's flesh. He made it a most grievous penalty for any Jew to circumcise their children, keeping informers, either to prosecute, or extort from them an obedience by terror or force, so that the major part of the Jews, either by their own accord or fear of punishment, complied with these orders, though some stood bravely against all trials or torment, and death itself, rather than depart from their religion and laws.* Some had

* The most remarkable martyrs were Eleazar, an old venerable man, who, refusing to eat swine's flesh, was stripped naked, beaten and tormented, and at last cast into the fire, and stinking liquors poured into his nostrils; all which he endured with constancy and patience, till he was consumed in the flames. Then was brought forth Solomona (whom some later Jewish historians call Hanna), a venerable aged women, with her seven sons, who could not be moved with the king's promises, nor by his threats, to forsake the law of her God; though all instruments of torture, as wheels, rods, hooks, caldrons, cages, gridirons, and the like, were laid before them. Maccabæus, the eldest son, was beaten, stripped, and stretched on a rack, round the wheels, till his sinews and bowels bursted, and at last thrown into the fire. Aber, the second son, was bound with iron chains, his skin flayed off to his knees, and then cast to a cruel leopard which would not touch him, and at last died, by the hands of his tormentors. Machir, the third son, endured yet worse, being tied round a globe, till his bones went out of joint, the skin plucked off his head and face, his tongue cut out, and then cast into a fiery frying-pan, where he died. Judas, the fourth brother, despising the king's commands, and the persuasion of spectators, being resolute never to forsake the law of his God, had his tongue cut out, was beaten with ropes at a stake, racked on the wheel, and died. Achas, the fifth brother, was cast into a brazen out, and died by west great to the arthur. pot, and died by most cruel torments. Areth, the sixth, had his tongue cut out, and died in the frying-pan. Jacob, the youngest, was put to death

then crucified alive with their wives, and so many of their children as were circumcised hanging about their necks, according to the king's order. The holy scriptures were destroyed also wherever they were found; and it was made death so much as to entertain them.

The Samaritans, conformable to the character we have before given of them, when they found the Jews reduced to so miserable a state of distress, for fear of being brought to bear a share in their calamities, immediately disclaimed all kindred with them, disowning the temple of Gerizim for the temple of God; and alleging themselves to be the race of the Medes and Persians. To enforce the belief of which, and in order to take off the danger apprehended upon this occasion, they sent a solemn embassy and address to Antiochus in these terms:

"To king Antiochus Epiphanes, the illustrious god, the humble petition of the Sidonians, inhabitants of Shechem, showeth,-That the forefathers of your petitioners, lying under the affliction of many and grievous plagues in their own country, were partly wrought on by that calamity, and in part prevailed upon by the superstition of an ancient custom, to join in the religious observance of a certain festival which the Jews called the sabbath, and in the erecting of the temple upon the mount of Gerizim, where sacrifices were offered to a god without a name.

by the like unspeakable torments, which he endured with incredible courage. The mother, at last, having seen all her sons thus put to death, and having encouraged them all to constancy and fortitude of mind, by pious speeches in the He-brew tongue, suffered martyrdom herself, with the like heroic spirit, under a thousand torments. The acts of these martyrs and their dying speeches are more fully recorded by Josephus, and in the book of Maccabees; and out of them by Mr Fox, Mr Clarke, and many other writers of martyrologies. Their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and the holy apostle seems to make honourable mention of them, saving, Heb. xi. 35. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.'-Millar.

Now, that your majesty hath been pleas-! ed to inflict a punishment upon this wicked people, suitable to the heinousness of their offences, and to appoint officers, who, upon a supposition that we were of the same stock, are thereby induced to involve your petitioners with the Jews in the same crime; whereas we derive our original from the Sidonians, as we can make appear by record extant to this day. May it please your majesty, to grant such order to Apollonius our governor in favour of your petitioners, that they may not be any farther molested for the future, upon the suspicion of any correspondence with the Jews, to whom we are as much strangers in our manners as in our extraction. And we do farther pray, that the temple which hath stood hitherto without any dedication, may from this time forward he called the temple of Jupiter of Greece, to the end that when we shall live in more security and freedom, as to the government of our own private affairs, we may the better attend those duties in the advancement of your service and revenue."

In answer to this request of the Samaritans, the king wrote back as followeth:

"King Antiochus to Nicanor .- Having received a petition from the Sidonians at Shechem, which we have here annexed to this letter, this is to let you understand, that it appeareth unto us, upon the information of the bearers thereof, that the Sidonians are no way guilty of the crimes charged upon the Jews; but on the contrary, that they govern themselves according to the way and fashion of the Greeks. Wherefore it is our will and pleasure that they receive no further trouble about the And to what concerns the temple, it is our will also, that from this time forward it may be known and distinguished by the name of Jupiter of Greece. We have written to the same effect also to our governor Apollonius. Dated in the forty-sixth year, and the eleventh day of the month."

village in Judea, one Mattathias, a priest of the family of Joarib, and a native of Jerusalem. This person, being of a pious disposition, would frequently condole with his sons on account of the deplorable state of the Jewish nation, their city being laid desolate, their temple pillaged and profaned, with many other calamities. would observe how much more glorious it would be to fall a sacrifice to the laws and religion of their country, than to linger out a miserable life in this servile manner.

When the king's officers entered the village, to enforce the execution of their master's orders, they began to tamper with Mattathias, as a person of authority, and one who might be a leading example to all the rest.

They laid before him the danger of disobeying, with the advantages and rewards he should receive upon his compliance. And upon these terms charged him, in the king's name, to worship as he was commanded, which he not only refused to do, but told them positively, "That if every soul within their master's dominions should yield to him in that particular, he would never submit himself, or advise any of his sons to abandon the religion of their country."

Mattathias stopped here; and after a short silence, a Jew came forth from the multitude to sacrifice according to the method prescribed by the officers; but Mattathias and his sons were so inflamed at the indignity of this affront, that in a fury they not only killed the Jew, but the king's officer Apelles, with all his guard, as they were forcing the people to that abominable worship.

In the violence of this resentment, they overturned the altar also; Mattathias calling out with a loud voice to the people about him, "As many of you as have a zealous regard for the purity of your religion, follow me."

The father and the sons then withdrew themselves into the wilderness, leaving There lived at this time in Modin, a their goods and effects behind them. They were soon followed by a number of families into the desert, where they lived for some time in caves.

When this came to the ears of the king's general officers, they drew the garrison out of the castle at Jerusalem, and marched after the Jews into the wilderness. Upon coming up to them, they endeavoured to bring them over, by fair words, advising them to bethink themselves, and to take more prudent measures, without forcing the soldiers upon the necessity of a military execution. But this was to no purpose; so that when they found all efforts ineffectual, they pitched upon the sabbath-day for an attack upon them, burning and destroying them in their places of retirement, without any resistance, or so much as stopping the mouths of their caves; for such was the reverence they had for the observation of that day, and the laws that commanded them to keep it holy, that they chose rather to perish than profane it.

There were near a thousand of them, men, women, and children, who were thus suffocated under ground; but there were also great numbers that escaped, and listed themselves under the command of Mattathias.

Mattathias finding the dire effect of this inactivity, represented to them the legality of defending themselves, when their lives were in danger on the sabbath, as well as upon any other day;* otherwise that

scruple would be their total destruction, their enemies, taking advantage of that superstition, would be sure to attack them at a time when they were certain they should meet with no resistance.

The propriety of this remark was so evident, that they were all convinced of the lawfulness of using their arms on the sabbath, in case of necessity; and the practice of it continued ever since.

The great general was by this time master of a considerable force, insomuch that he destroyed their altars, and put all apostates to the sword, appointing children to be circumcised, which was before forbidden, and expelling the king's officers that were appointed to hinder it,—having drawn into a body all that had dispersed themselves up and down into hiding-places for fear of the enemy.

Mattathias having now been a full year in this command, felt himself seized with certain symptoms of death; and calling his sons about him, spoke to them to this purpose:

" My dear sons, my life is drawing to

healing the sick and the lame on the sabbath. Mattathias, and his company, by sundry experiences, were convinced, that too scrupulous an observance of the sabbath had brought several calamities upon their nation; that Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, the first king of Egypt of that name, by assaulting Jerusalem on the sabbath-day, (wherein the Jews would do nothing to defend themselves,) became master of it without opposite tion; and that (but just lately) a great number of their brethren had been passively slain, because they would not so much as handle their arms on that day; and thereupon they came to a resolution to defend themselves, whenever they were attacked, be the day what it would; but we do not find that they came to any decision, whether they themselves were to attack the enemy on the sabbath. On the contrary, it seems, as if they had determined, that they were only permitted to repel force by force; and therefore we read, that, when Pompey besieged the temple, observing that the Jews did barely defend themselves on the seventh day, he ordered his men to offer no hostilities, but only to raise the batteries, plant their engines, and make their approaches on that day, being well assured, that, in doing of this, he should meet with no molestation from them; and, by this means, he carried the place much sooner than he otherwise would have done.—Jewish Antig. lib. xiv. c. 8. Jewish Wars, lib. i. c. 5. and Calmet's Commentary.

^{*} By the law of Moses, the Jews were commanded to do no manner of work on the sabbathday; but this was a precept which would admit of some exceptions, and what some people took in a more rigorous sense than others. The Samaritans, for instance, thought themselves obliged to observe it to such a degree of strictness, as not to stir out of their places on that day, because the law is literally so expressed, Exod. xvi. 29. but the Jews were of opinion, that they were permitted to make their escape from danger, or to walk such a compass of ground, (which they called a sabbath-day's journey,) if it were for any necessary occasion, on that day. In our Saviour's time it was allowable, they thought, to pull any animal out of a pit, or a ditch on that day, Mat. xii. 11. but the Talmudical doctors were for revoking that permission, and found fault with him for even

an end; but I am now to charge you upon my blessing, before I leave you, that you stand firm to the cause that your father has asserted before you without the least deviation. Remember what I have told you; and do as I have advised you. Do your utmost to support the rights and laws of your country, and to restore the order of a nation that is almost devoured by its own corruptions and idolatries; shun all communication with those that either for fear, or for interest, have betrayed it. Show yourselves sons worthy of such a father, in defiance of all opposition, and in defence of your country; esteeming this the only way to preserve you in God's favour. And that in consideration of so unshaken a virtue, he will, in time, restore you to your former life and manners. Our bodies, it is true, are mortal, but great and general actions will make us immortal in our memory, and that is the glory to which I would have you aspire. Be sure to agree among yourselves, and in what degree soever any of you hath an advantage over the rest, resign to him the business of his province. As for example, it being Simon's faculty to make a right judgment of things, I shall advise you to pay the same regard to his counsels as those of a father. Maccabæus excels in military conduct and bravery; wherefore choose him for your general, as the best qualified for the vindication of your friends, and for the crushing of your enemies."

CHAPTER V.

Judas succeeds Mattathias in the command of the Jewish army.—Defeats the governors of Samaria; goes to Jerusalem.—Purifies the temple, and regulates the confused state of his countrymen.—Performs many gallant exploits in conjunction with Simon.—Transportation of the Jews out of Galilee into Judea.—Destruction of Ephron.—Joseph and Azarias, in fighting contrary to order, are defeated.

MATTATHIAS concluded his discourse to his sons with prayers to God for a bless-

ing upon their endeavours towards the redemption of their countrymen and the recovery of their ancient rights and privileges.

Soon after this he expired, and was buried at Modin. After his funeral obsequies were solemnized, Judas, otherwise Maccabeus,* had the public administration put into his hands, which was in the year one hundred forty six, reckoning from Seleucus the first; and he was so well supported by his brothers, that he cleared the country of the enemy, and purged the land from all the abominable pollutions that had been practised therein.

The news of this turn of affairs upon the succession of Judas, induced Apollonius,† the governor of Samaria, to advance with his army against Judas; who, without loss of time, met him half way, fought and routed him, killed a great number of his people upon the spot, together with Apollonius himself, disarming him with his own hand, and carrying off his sword in triumph. Likewise he had also the spoil of the camp, a booty of prodigious value.

The tidings of this defeat, and of the vast reinforcements that came thronging in to Judas upon this success, gave Seron, the governor of Cœlo-syria, to understand, that it was necessary to be upon his guard, so that he took a resolution immediately to come to a battle, esteeming himself bound to chastise the mutinous, and bring the rebellious to obedience.

† This, in all probability, was the same Apollonius whom Antiochus seut at first to plunder Jerusalem, and afterwards to set up the statue of Jupiter Olympius, and to compel the Jews to relinquish their religiou.—Calmet's Commentary.

^{*} The motto of Judas on his standard was a Hebrew sentence, taken from Exod. xv. 11: not written at length, but, by an abbreviation, formed of the initial letters, which made the artificial word Maccabi: hence, all that fought under that standard were called Maccabees, or Maccabeans; and he, in a special manner, being their captain, had the same name by way of eminence. This practice of abbreviating sentences and names by putting together the initial letters of the words, and thus forming an artificial word to express the whole, has been common among the Jews.—Grotius, Dean Prideaux.

men he had of his own, and with the additional force of a rabble of fugitive Jews, he took his march to Bethoron, a village of Judea, where he pitched his camp. Upon which Judas put himself in a posture to encounter him; but finding his soldiers indisposed for action, whether it was for fear of their mighty army, or for faintness upon over-fasting, he made them a short harangue, that animated them with fresh courage and resolution, in the following words :-

"Fellow soldiers, it is not the arm of flesh, but God, that gives the victory; not multitudes of men, but trust and confidence in the Almighty. This is no more than we have found many times experimentally true in the history of our ancestors; who, with an inconsiderable number of men, in a righteous cause, that is, in defence of their religion, laws, liberty, wives, and children, have put many thousands to flight. Great is truth, in short, and the force of innocence is invincible."

With these spirited words he led his men on to the battle, where they behaved themselves like heroes; engaged Seron, and killed him upon the spot, and defeated the whole army of the Assyrians. For upon the fall of their general, their troops were presently broken and scattered, and every man's business was to secure his own flight.

Judas pursued them as far as the plain; about eight hundred of them were slain in the field of battle, and the rest made their escape towards the sea side.

These disasters immediately succeeding each other, compelled Antiochus to raise a considerable army for the next campaign, which he effected, by means of his own people, and the addition of foreign mercenaries, determined to enter Judea early the following spring.

But these troubles had so interrupted the raising of his taxes, besides the frankness and generosity of his own nature,

In order to this expedition, with what | that upon the payment of his troops, he found money fall short, and that his revenue would not answer the charge of the

> Upon this consideration, he proposed rather to go into Persia first, and to supply himself with what money he could raise in that province, leaving the command of all the country, between Egypt and the Euphrates, during his absence, in the hands of one Lysias, a person of approved integrity, together with some part also of his troops and elephants; giving him further in charge to take particular care of his son Antiochus, till he should come back again.

> And, moreover, that upon the reducing of Judea, and the selling of all the inhabitants for slaves, he would utterly destroy the city, and extirpate the nation.

> Having given these orders, he marched from Persia, and, passing the Euphrates, advanced forward into the higher coun-

> Lysias took to his assistance, in the execution of this commission, Ptolemy Macron the son of Dorymenes, Gorgias, and Nicanor, three of the best officers he could find among the king's friends. He put these commanders at the head of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, with orders to march forthwith into Judea.

They advanced as far as Emmaus,* and

^{*} Emmaus, signifying hot baths, was a village. sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half, north-west of Jerusalem, celebrated for our Lord's conversation with two disciples who went thither on the day of his resurrection. Josephus (de Bello, lib. viii. cap. 27.) says, that Vespasian left 800 soldiers in Judea, to whom he gave the village of Emmaus, which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem. D'Arvieux states, (vol. vii. p. 259.) that going from Jerusalem to Rama, he took the right from the high road to Rama, at some little distance from Jerusalem, and "travelled a good league over rocks and flint stones, to the end of the valley of terebinthine trees," till he reached Emmans. "It seems, by the ruins which surrounded it, that it was formerly larger than it was in our Saviour's time. The Christians, while masters of the Holy Land, re-established it a little, and built several churches. Emmaus was not worth the trouble of having come out of the way to see it. Ruins, indeed, we saw on all sides; and tables we heard from every quarter, though

there encamped upon the plain, where but all the comforts and advantages that there came over to them a great number of auxiliaries from Syria, and other neighbouring countries, and an abundance of fugitive Jews; besides several merchants and traders, with great sums of money to buy slaves; * these brought fetters and manacles with them of all sorts to secure their captives.

The enemy had raised a formidable army; but Judas bade them cast themselves upon the protection of the Almighty, and fear nothing. And they humbled themselves in sackcloth, fasting, and prayer, according to the custom of the country when in imminent danger, imploring God's mercy, favour, and protection.

The general's next business was to range his men by regiments, troops, and companies, in order of battle, according to the Jewish custom; and then to discharge the army of all new married men, and such as had lately made purchases, who probably might be diverted from their duty, between the care of their particular interest and the service of the public; and animating his people also at the same time, by his words, as well as his actions, to acquit themselves like men of honour and courage.

"We shall never," says he, "my fellow soldiers and companions, have such an opportunity again of showing our bravery in the defence of our country, and the contempt of all danger, as we have now before us; for upon the issue of to-morrow's combat depend, not only our liberty.

under the guise of traditions. Such is the notion of the house of Cleopas; on the site of which a great church was erected, of which a few masses

of the thick walls remain, but nothing else."-

certain to the one as to the other; but there's a great difference in point of honour, between a gallant man that falls in the vindication of his religion, liberties, laws, and country, and a coward that abandons all for fear of losing a life which he cannot save at last. Set these things before your mind, and rest assured that you have nothing to trust to but God's providence, and your own concurring resolutions: and at the worst, while we contend for victory, we can never fail of glory." After this speech of Judas to his soldiers, while his thoughts were intent upon the success of the approaching battle, he received certain intelligence, that Gorgias would be with him that night with a thousand horse and five thousand foot, with some renegado Jews for their guide, to surprise him, and beat up his quarters. This discovery put Judas upon a design of surprising him; taking the opportunity of his army being so divided. In order to this he caused several fires to be made in his camp, and so marched all night towards

attend it; and, over and above the bless-

ing of such a freedom, our very religion

lies at stake with it too, and we cannot se-

cure the one but by preserving the other.

Remember therefore what it is that you

are to contend for, and you shall find it to

be no less than the sum and substance of

the greatest happiness that ever you enjoyed, that is to say, the peaceable posses-

sion of your ancient laws, rites, and disci-

pline. Now whether you will rather choose

to perish with infamy, and to involve the miserable remainder of all your country-

men in the same ruin, or venture one gen-

erous effort for the redemption of your-

selves, and your friends, is the point before you. Death is the same thing to a

coward that it is to a valiant man, and as

* From 2 Macc. viii. 10, 11. it appears, that Nicanor, proposing to raise a sum of money to defray the arrears of tribute due from the king to the Romans, and confident of victory over the Jews, proclaimed a sale of the captives beforehand, at the rate of ninety for a talent, or about two pounds sterling a head. This brought together a thousand principal merchants to the Syrian camp, besides a great number of 'servants' and assistants, to help them in carrying off the slaves they should purchase.—Dean Prideaux, Dr Hales.

Gorgias, in the mean time, finding the Jews' camp deserted; and presuming that they were run away through fear, to hide themselves in the mountains, determined

Emmaus, where the enemy lay encamped.

break of day to the enemy's camp, with only three thousand men, and those badly armed; and finding the enemy well armed, and their camp in very good order, he told his people for their encouragement, that they should not fear to attack them, even if they were all naked, so long as they were certain of God's favour and protection, which would support them against all other difficulties; with these words he ordered the charge to be sounded; and breaking in upon them at the same instant, put them into such consternation, that after putting those to the sword that resisted, the rest betook themselves to flight, he pursued them as far as Gadara,* and thence to the plains of Idumea, + Azotus,

* Gadara was a city east of the Jordan, in the Decapolis. Josephus calls, it the capital of Peræa; and Pliny (lib. v. cap. 16.) places it on the river Hieromax, (Jarmuch,) about five miles from its junction with the Jordan. It gave name to a district which extended, probably, from the region of Scythopolis to the borders of Tiberias, Pompey repaired Gadara, in consideration of Demetrius his freed-man, a native of it; and Gabinius settled there one of the five courts of justice for Judea. Polybius says, that Antiochus the Great besieged this city, which was thought to be one of the strongest places in the country, and that it surrendered to him on composition. Epiphanius speaks of its hot baths. The evangelists Mark and Luke say that our Saviour, having passed the sea of Tiberias, came into the district of the Gadarenes. Matthew (viii. 28.) calls it Gergasenes; but as the lands belonging to one of these cities were included within the limits of the other, one evangelist might say, the country of 'he Gergasenes, another the country of the Gadarenes; either being equally correct. Mr Bankes thinks that the place called Oom-kais, where are shown numerous caverns and extensive ruins, marks the site of Gadara; but Mr Buckingham speaks of Oom-kais as Gamala. If Gadara be properly understood as denoting a fenced protection, the name might, with great propriety, be common in many parts; and such retreats would be no less necessary at the northern extremities of the country than at the southern .- Cal-

† Wherever the name of Idumea, or the land of Edom, occurs in any of the writings of the Old Testament, it is to be understood of that Idumea, or land of Edom, which lay between the lake of Sodom and the Red sea, and was afterwards called Arabia Petræa. But the inhabitants of this country, heing driven out by the Nabathæans, while the Jews were in the Babylonish captivity, and their land laid desolate, they then took possession of as much of the southern part of it as contained what

to find them out. But Judas coming by break of day to the enemy's camp, with only three thousand men, and those badly armed; and finding the enemy well armed, and their camp in very good order, he told his people for their encouragement, that they should not fear to attack them, even

While he was delivering these words, Gorgias's people discovering from an eminence at hand, the dead bodies of their friends, the havoc that had been made in their tents, and their camp covered with smoke, they took it for granted that Judas's men were still embodied, and in condition to attack them; so that they fled, and dispersed themselves, every man consulting his own safety. The victory being thus gained, Judas permitted his men at pleasure to take the pillage of the field, where they found gold and silver, costly habits of purple and scarlet, and other rich booty in abundance; which they carried off in triumph, singing as they marched, and giving thanks to God, the author of that victory, which proved both an earnest and a foundation of their future freedom.

Lysias was so sensible of the shame arising from this defeat, that, to redeem his credit, he brought into the field, the

had formerly been the whole inheritance of the tribe of Simeon, and half of the tribe of Judah, where, at this time, they dwelt, but had not as yet embraced the Jewish religion. And this is the only Idumean, and the inhabitants of it the only Idumeans, or Edomites, which are any where spoken of after the Babylonish captivity.—Prideaux's Connection.

[†] The same as Jabneh, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6. a maritime town in Palestine between Azotus and Joppa. The following is Dr Wittman's account of it. "Yebna is a village about twelve miles distant from Jaffa; in a fine open plain, surrounded by hills and covered with herbage. A rivulet formed by the rains supplies water. It is conjectured that the rock Etam, where Samson was surprised by the Philistines, was not far from Yebna. North-east of Yebna is a lofty hill, from which is an extensive and pleasing view of Ramla, distant about five miles. On sloping hills of easy ascent, by which the plains are bordered, Yebna, Ekron, Ashdod, and Ashkalon, were in sight." Josephus says Jamnia was given to the tribe of Dan. In 2 Mac. xii. 9. it is stated to be 240 furlongs from Jerusalem.—Calmet.

approved valour, and with this body he entered Judea, by the way of the mountains, encamping at a place called Bethsura.*

Judas was not at all discouraged at his superiority of number, but marched directly towards him with an army of ten thousand men only. His trust was in God alone; so after a short and fervent prayer for a blessing upon his arms, he charged the enemy with such intrepidity, that upon the first shock he forced the line, and cut off five thousand men upon the

This unexpected disaster put their whole army into such confusion, that Lysias, finding them obstinately determined either to live or die in the possession of their liberty, thought proper to withdraw his troops before the consternation became too general; so that he returned to Antioch, where he posted himself by the help of mercenaries, and other additional reinforcements, in the most convenient situation for another attack.

Judas was so flushed with these repeated successes against the forces of Antioch, that he prevailed upon the Jews, in confidence that, after so many victories obtained, God would not forsake them, to march without any more delay to Jerusalem itself, and there to purge the temple, and offer up their daily sacrifice. But when they came thither, and found the temple abandoned, the gates all burnt, and the courts overrun with weeds, Judas and his people could not refrain from tears.

The two great works that he first entered upon, were the assault of the citadel,

year following, an army of sixty thousand and the cleansing of the temple. The foot, and five thousand horse; all men of former he committed to his officers and soldiers, and reserved the care of the latter to himself. As soon as he had. gone through with the purging of it in form, he provided new vessels and utensils; a candlestick, a table, and an altar of incense, all of pure gold, put up new veils and hangings upon the walls, and before the passages of the doors, and in the next place supplied the doors themselves. The altar that had been profaned with idolatrous sacrifices and burnt-offerings, was demolished and removed; and another of unhewn stone erected in its place.

Upon the twenty-fifth day of the month Chisleu, which the Macedonians call Apellæus, they set lighted tapers in the candlesticks; + offered incense upon the altar, laid the show-bread upon the table, and presented their oblations of burnt-offerings. This fell out precisely upon the same day, three years from the profanation of the temple and religion by Antiochus; the temple having now been full three years deserted.

This happened in the year one hundred forty-five of the Seleucidæ; the twentyfourth day of the month Apellæus, and the hundred and fifty-third Olympiad; which solemnity of purification was repeated also on the anniversary day of the year one hundred and forty-eight, and in the hundred and fifty-fourth Olympiad,as the prophet Daniel had expressly foretold four hundred and eight years before the desolation by the Macedonians came

^{*} A strong fortress on the frontiers of Idumea, originally built by Reholoam, 2 Chron. xi. 7.
It lay opposite to south Edom, and defended the passages into Judea from thence. We read in 2 Mac. xi. 5. that Bethsura was five furlongs from Jerusalem; but this is evidently a mistake. Eusebius places it twenty miles from that city, toward Hebron, and Dr Pococke speaks of a village on a hill thereabouts called Bethsaon.

[†] Having first struck fire by dashing two stones against each other, 2 Macc. x. 3; and from the same fire they lighted the seven lamps on the golden candlestick. The sacred fire, which came down from heaven at the dedication of Solomon's temple, was extinguished at the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians: till which time it had there been kept constantly burning. After that they used no other than common fire in the temple; but still they avoided the bringing thither of any common fire which had been profaned by other uses, and therefore kindled a flame by dashing two stones against each other .- Dean Prideaux.

The celebration of this festivity was continued by Judas for eight days, with solemn sacrifices and rejoicing as well as all the innocent tokens of mirth and festivity, such as acclamation, praise, and thanksgiving. The people were so transported at the unexpected blessing of finding themselves restored to the religion and laws of their forefathers, that they appointed an anniversary of eight days' solemnity * to be strictly observed by their posterity for ever. Judas in the mean time rebuilt the walls of the city, and fortified them with strong towers + to keep off an enemy. He also fortified the city Bethsura, and put the place into a posture of defence.

* This festival is commemorated in the gospel, John ii. 23 and our blessed Saviour, we are told, came up to Jerusalem on purpose to bear a part in the solemnizing of it. Some indeed are of opinion that it was another dedication-feast which Christ thus honoured with his presence; but, be-sides that the dedications both of Solomon's and Zerubbabel's temples (though they were very sol-emnly celebrated at the first erection of these temples) had never any anniversary feast afterwards kept in commemoration of them, the very history of the gospel (which tells us that it was kept in winter) confines us to this dedication of Judas only. That of Solomon was on the seventh month, which fell about the time of the autumnal equinox; and that of Zerubbabel was on the twelfth month, which fell in the beginning of the spring; but that of Judas Maccabæus was on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which fell in the middle of winter. So that the feast of the dedication, which Christ was present at in Jerusalem, was no other than that which was instituted by Judas, in com-memoration of his dedication of the temple anew, after that it had been cleansed from idolatrous pollutions; and from hence Grotius (in his commentary on the gospel of St John, chap. x. 22.) very justly observes, that festival days, in memory of public blessings, may be piously instituted by persons in authority, without a divine command. Prideaux's Connection.

+ Apollonius, in taking Jerusalem, had erected a fortress on mount Acra, which, commanding the mountain of the temple, and being still in the hands of the enemy, gave them the advantage of annoying all those who went up to the temple to worship. To remedy this inconvenience, Judas at first blocked up the fortress, but finding that he could not conveniently spare the requisite number of men, he caused the mountain of the temple to be fortified with strong walls and high towers, and placed therein a sufficient garrison, both to defend t, and protect those who went up to worship from all future insults, either from the fortress or from any other place. - Dean Prideaux, Stackhouse.

The neighbouring nations were so irritated at the growing power of the Jews, that they set their instruments to work by fraud and treachery to circumvent and destroy them,-Judas, in the meantime, using the best means he could, either to prevent, or to disappoint their incursions. He fell at this time upon Acrabatene, ‡ where he killed great numbers of the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, making himself master also of a great booty.

He blocked up the sons of Bean & likewise, in the strong places they were possessed of, and where they laid in wait to make sallies upon the Jews, taking the places by assault, killing the defendants, and laying the forts in ashes.

After the subduing of these people, he carried his arms against the Ammonites, who had at that time a numerous army under the command of Timotheus. He fought with these, and overcame them, and took the city of Jazar; carried away the people's wives and children captives; and after the pillaging of the city, set it on fire, and so returned home victorious.

He was no sooner gone than the people of the adjacent countries, taking advantage of his departure, and gathering together at Gilead, | made an attempt upon the Jews that lay in that quarter. These being forced to take sanctuary in the fortress of Dathema, gave intimation to Judas, that Timotheus had a design to attack

It is a canton of Judea, upon the frontiers of Idumea, towards the southern extremity of the Dead sea.

This city, which lay beyond the Jordan, was first of all given to the tribe of Gad, and afterwards to the Levites, Joshua xxi. 36. It was situated at the foot of the mountains of Gilead, near the brook Jazah, which forms a rivulet, or torrent,

that falls into the Jordan.

Who these children of Bean were, it is difficult to say. Some think that this Bean was the name of an ancient king, whose descendants lived in hostility with the children of Israel; but others (with more probability) account it the name of a place; and if in the confines of the Dead sea, there was (as some affirm) a city of this name, without all controversy this was it.—Calmet's Commen-

In the very instant that Judas was reading this account, several messengers arrived from Galilee,* with remonstrances and complaints, that the people of Ptolemais, + Tyre, and Sidon, and other border-

* Galilee was one of the most extensive prowinces into which the Holy Land was divided; but it probably varied in its limits at different periods. It is divided by the Rabbins into 1. the Upper; 2. the Nether; and 3. the Valley. Josephus limits Galilee west, by the city of Ptolemais and mount Carmel; on the south by the country of Samaria and Scythopolis; on the east by the cantons of Hippos, Gadara, and Gaulan; on the north by the confines of the Tyrians. Lower Galilee reaches in length from Tiberias to Chabus. lon, or Zabulon, the frontier of Ptolemais; in width from Chaloth, in the great plain, to Bersabee. The breadth of Upper Galilee begins at Bersabee, and extends to Baca, which separates it from the Tyrians. Its length reaches from Tella, a village on the river Jordan, to Meroth. But the exact situation of these places is not This province contained four tribes; Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, and Asher; a part also of Dan; and part of Perea, beyond the river. Upper Galilee abounded in mountains, and was termed 'Galilee of the Gentiles,' as the moun-tainous nature of the country enabled those who possessed the fastnesses to maintain themselves against invaders. Strabo (lib. xvi.) enumerates against invaders. Strabo (no. Xvi.) enumerates among its inhabitants, Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians. Lower Galilee, which contained the tribes of Zebulun and Asher, was sometimes called the Great Field, "the champaign," Deut. xi. 30. The valley was adjacent to the sea of Tiberias. Josephus, describes Galilee as being very populous, containing two hundred and four cities and towns, the least of which contained 15,000 inhabitants. It was also very rich, and paid two bundred talents in tribute. The natives were brave, and made good soldiers; they were also seditious, and prone to insolence and rebellion. Their language and customs differed considerably from those of the Judeans, Mark xiv. 70. Josephus states that the Galileans were naturally good soldiers, bold and intrepid; that they bravely resisted the foreign nations around them; that their country was fruitful, and well cultivated; and the people laborious and industrious. The Galileans, according to the same author, agreed in all things with the Pharisees, but were distinguished by an excessive love of liberty; being strongly prejudiced with the idea, that they ought to obey God alone as their prince.—Calmet.

+ A city and considerable port of Phænicia, situated on the north angle of a bay which extends

in a semicircle of three leagues, as far as the point of Carmel. Its ancient name was Accho, Judg. i. 31. and was subsequently called Ptolemais, from one of the Ptolemies of Egypt. It lies twenty-seven miles south of Tyre, and upwards of ninety-eight inroad distance north of Jerusalem. Its pre-

them and earnestly desired he would send | ing nations, were all joined in a confederacy against them.

> Judas, determined on the relief of his friends and countrymen in both places, sent his brother Simon with three thousand choice men to the succour of the Jews at Galilee; and with eight thousand more marched with his other brother Jonathan, to Gilead, leaving the rest of the army under the command of Joseph the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, as his lieutenant-generals, for the guard of Jerusalem, with orders to avoid coming to action till his return.

> Simon, upon his arrival at Galilee, engaged the enemy, and defeated them, pursuing them to the very gates of Ptolemais, and killing about three thousand in the flight. They stripped them of what they had, and redeemed the prisoners with the goods they had taken from them, and then conducted them back to Jerusalem.

> At the same time Judas and his brother Jonathan, after three days' march beyond Jordan in the wilderness, were hospitably entertained by the Nabatheans, 1 who very

> sent name of St Jean d'Acre was imposed on it in the time of the crusades by the knights of St John of Jerusalem. This place has obtained lasting renown from the various sieges it has sustained at different periods of its history, particularly that which it underwent from the crusaders, when it was finally taken by Richard the Lion-hearted, after a long and very gallant defence by its Sara-cenic garrison; and lastly, in 1799, when it sustained a siege from the French arms under Napoleon Bonaparte, who was compelled to abandon the enterprise, the garrison being aided in their defence by a body of British sailors from the squadron under Sir Sidney Smith. This city had fallen rapidly to decay after the expulsion of the Christians by the Mameluke sultans of Egypt, and was almost deserted, till the celebrated Jezzar Pasha, by repairing the town and harbour, made it the first city, in point of strength and importance, on the coast. It contains at present about 20,000 inhabitants. All the rice, which is the staple food of the people of Palestine, enters by this port, and hence the importance of this place. -Bell's Geog.
>
> ‡ Arabians descended from Nebajoth. Their

country is called Nabathæa, and extends from the Euphrates to the Red sea, the chief cities of which are Petra, the capital of Arabia Deserta, and

kindly gave them intelligence of the extreme distress and danger of divers of their friends and countrymen, who were close shut up in the towns and castles of Gilead; advising them with all imaginable expedition, to hasten by the way of the desert to their relief.

In this expedition, they took the town of Bossora* by the way, putting all the people to the sword that were able to bear arms, and burning the city to the ground.

Though it was now almost night, Judas prosecuted his way to a castle wherein he understood the Jews were besieged; and arriving there betimes in the morning, found the enemy playing their machines, and fixing their scaling ladders to force the place; whereupon he arranged his troops in three divisions, and animated his men to behave themselves resolutely for the relief of their countrymen and friends; and upon the sound of the trumpet he charged the enemy in the rear.

As soon as Timotheus understood that Judas Maccabeus had the command of this action, a person whose valour and conduct he knew by woful experience, his men were so dismayed at the very name, that they immediately fled, and Judas pursuing them with his army, slew about eight thousand of them. After this Judas took Maspha, Casphan, Maked, and Bosor, and having treated them in the same manner as he had done at Bossora, he returned to Jerusalem.

Soon after this, Timotheus raised a very considerable army, and, among other

auxiliaries, he had a band of Arabians They crossed the river Jabbok, and encamped near a place called Raphon, where he encouraged his people to acquit themselves like men, and be sure to keep the Jews from passing the river, observing to them, that the whole cause depended upon it; and that if ever they gained that pass, they would most certainly carry the day.

When Judas understood what Timotheus was resolved upon, and prepared for a battle, he passed the river immediately with his army, gave the onset, and put the army to the rout upon the first encounter; killing those that resisted, and putting the rest to flight. These casting away their arms, dispersed; part of them betook themselves for sanctuary to the temple of Carnion, in hope that the place might protect them. But Judas took the town by force, burnt the temple, and destroyed all the inhabitants by fire and sword.

This difficulty being surmounted, he gathered together all the Israelites that were in the countries of Gilead, with their wives, children, and goods, and carried them all into Judea.

The city of Ephron,† lying so directly in his way, he sent a message to the inhabitants for leave to pass with his army through the town; but the ports being barricadoed, and the avenues cut off, the inhabitants in plain terms denied him a passage.

Upon this repulse, he encouraged his men to attack the town; they surrounded it immediately, and in one day and night,

^{*} This place was known likewise by the name of Bezer, or Bozra, or Bostra. When scripture mentions Bezer, it adds, 'in the wilderness,' because it lay in Arabia Deserta, and the eastern parts of Edom, encompassed with deserts. Eusebius places it twenty-four miles from Edrai. This city is sometimes spoken of as belonging to Reuben, sometimes to Moab, and sometimes again to Edom; because, as it was a frontier town to these three provinces, it was occasionally in the hands of one, and then was taken by another. The city is now called Bostra; and is described by Burckhardt as the largest town in the Haouran including its ruins, though only inhabited by twelve or fifteen families.

[†] It is not known what was the particular situation of Ephron. The author of the book of Maccabees seems to imply, that the country all about it was impassable; that is, very probably so full of water and morasses, that the army of Judas must have been lost, had they been obliged to "turn either on the right hand or the left." They were under the necessity therefore of passing through the town: and Grotius asserts, that the refusal of the inhabitants to let them pass, after the promise of the Israelites to march through the country quietly and inoffensively, was an act contrary to the just rights of human society.—Stackhouse.

of the dead, through the ruins, putting all the males that were found in it to the

After passing the river Jordan, they advanced to a great plain near Bethshan, called by the Greeks Scythopolis, and from thence returned to Judea, the people rejoicing as they passed along, with hymns and triumphal songs, and offering sacrifices of thanksgiving for the safety of the army; for they had not yet lost so much as one Jew in these engagements.

Joseph, the son of Zacharias, together with Azarias, two great captains, being left for a guard to Judea, in the absence of Simon, who had marched into Galilee against the people of Ptolemais, and Judas, with his brother Jonathan against the Gileadites, thought it incumbent on them to signalize themselves by some glorious enterprise as well as their brethren.

With this spirit of emulation they advanced to Jamnia, where Gorpias, the governor of the place, gave them battle before the town, killed about two thousand of them, and pursued the rest to the very borders of Judea.

This calamity deservedly befell them, for not obeying the order of their general, who had positively commanded them not to engage the enemy upon any terms, till his return. Such a caution redounded much to the reputation of Judas, who was well assured, that if they departed from their instructions, they would suffer for it.

But Judas and his brethren carried on the war in the mean time, with the utmost vigour against the Edomites, subduing them on all hands.

They took Hebron by force, demolished the fortifications, and burnt the towers and castles to the ground, laid their enemy's country waste, demolished Marissa, and from thence overran and pillaged Azotus.

Having performed these exploits, and Commentary.

made himself master of it, laid it in ashes, enriched themselves with a considerable and marched with his army over the bodies booty, they returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VI.

The ambition and avarice of Antiochus retaliated in his own disgrace.-He dies .- Philip appointed to the regency during the minority of his son .- The young prince is declared king .- The Jews are harassed by the Macedonians .- Eleazar is slain .- Death of Onias. -Antiochus and Lysias put to death .- Ravages and depredations of Alcimus.

As Antiochus Epiphanes was about this progress through some of his highland provinces, he was told of a certain rich city in Persia called Elymais, and of a most magnificent temple in it, dedicated to Diana,* in which were deposited precious gifts of all sorts, with the very shield and breastplate of Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedon.

Antiochus was so attracted by these

^{*} Other authors agree with the account in the first book of Maccabees, that the temple of Elymais was prodigiously rich; and both Polybius and Diodorus Siculus (as they are cited by St Jerome, on Dan xi.) mention this attempt of the king of Syria to plunder it. But the manner in which he came to be disappointed, is related quite differently in the second book of Maccabees. For, therein we are told, that when Antiochus, pretending that he would marry the goddess of the temple, (whose name was Nannea) that thereby he might have the better title to the riches of it, by way of dowry, was let into the temple to take possession of them, the priests opened a secret door that was in the ceiling, and from thence threw upon him and his attendants, such a shower of stones as quite overwhelmed them, and so cut off their heads and cast them out, 2 Maccab. i. 13, &c. but who the goddess Nannea, who had this temple at Elymais, was, the conjectures of the learned are various, since some will have her to be Venus, and others Cybele the mother of the gods, because the word in the Persian language signifies mother, though the most common opinion is, that she was Diana or the moon, the same that Strabo calls Anais, or Anaitis: for, that she was held to be a virgin-goddess, is plain, because Antiochus pretended to espouse her, and that she was a chaste goddess, Plutarch (de Artaxerxes) seems to intimate when he tells us, that Artaxerxes took the beautiful Aspasia, (whom himself was in love with) from his son Darius, and devoted her to a perpetual virginity in the service of Anais, the goddess of Ecbatana. - Calmet's

splendid curiosities, that he advanced to- When Antiochus found himself near his ward it with his army to take it by assault; but the inhabitants, without any regard either to his power or his design, made a brave resistance and disappointed his expectation; nor did they content themselves with beating him from the walls, but followed him so close upon his retreat, that they cut off great part of his rear, and drove him before them like a fugitive for protection into Babylon.

While he lay under this disgrace, news came of the defeat of his other troops, to whom he had committed the care and conduct of the war against the Jews, and of the daily increase of their number and power; so that, greatly oppressed with grief and concern for his various losses and disappointments, he fell sick, and finding his dissolution approach, he called his friends about him, and told them both the cause and nature of his distemper.

"I am," said he, "justly punished for the sake of these miserable Jews, for the sacrilegious rising and profaning of their temple, and for the contempt of the heavenly God." When he had thus said, he expired.*

end, he sent for Philip as the most trusty of his friends, and committed the regency of his kingdom into his hands, delivering up to him at the same time the crown, the royal robes and signet, with orders to preserve them for his son Antiochus, who was then in his minority, strictly enjoining him to take care of his education, and

rotting till he died. In his mind his torments were no less, by reason of the several spectres and apparitions of evil spirits, which he imagined were continually about him, reproaching and stinging his conscience with accusations of the evil deeds which he had been guilty of. Being made sensi-ble at length by his afflictions, that all his sufferings were from the hand of God, for his plundering and profanation of his temple at Jerusalem, and for his hatred and cruelties to his servants who worshipped there, he made an ample acknowledgment of this before he died, and many vows and solemn promises of a full reparation in case he recovered. But his repentance came too late: and therefore, after having languished out a while in this miserable condition, and under these horrid this miserable condition, and under these horrid torments of body and mind, at length being half consumed with the rottenness of his ulcer, he gave up the ghost, and died, after he had reigned eleven years. Stackhouse.—Many of the heathen writers give us this account of him, namely, that he would frequently get out of the palace, and ramble about the streets of Antioch with two contracts only accompanying him. or three persons only accompanying him: that in his rambles he would drink with strangers and foreigners, and even with the meanest and vilest of them; that when he heard of any young company met together to make merry, he would intrude himself among them, and revel away the time with them in cups and songs and other frolics, without any regard to common decency or his own royal character; that in these frolies, he would often go out in the streets, and there scatter his money by handfuls for the rabble to scramble for; that at other times, he would go about with a crown of roses upon his head, and in a Roman gown would walk the streets alone, carrying a parcel of stones in his lap, to throw at those that should follow after; that he was much addicted to drunkenness and lasciviousness; was frequently found in the company of pathics and common prostitutes, on whom he would gratify his lust publicly and in the sight of the people; and that, having for his catamites two vile persons, called Timarchus and Heraclides, who were brothers, he made the former of them governor of Babylon, and the other his treasurer in that province. short is, his freaks, follies, and vices were so many, that men were in doubt whether he were a madman or a fool, though the former of these was generally thought his truest character: and therefore, instead of Epiphanes the illustrious, they commonly called him Epimanes, the madman.

^{*} Having understood that the Jews had pulled down the images and altars that he had erected, recovered their temple at Jerusalem, and restored that place to its former worship, he made all the haste home he could, threatening, as he went along, utterly to destroy the whole nation, and make Jerusalem the common place of sepulture to all the Jews. But while these proud words were in his mouth, the judgment of God overtook him; for he was instantly seized with a pain in his bowels, and a grievous torment in his inward parts, which no remedy could assuage. Being resolute, how-ever, in his revenge, he ordered his charioteer to double his speed; but in the rapid motion the chariot was overturned, and he thrown to the ground with such violence, as sorely bruised his whole body, and mashed (as it were) his limbs with the fall; so that being able to travel no farther, he was forced to put in at Tabæ, a little town in the confines of Persia and Babylonia, where he suffered most exquisite torments, both of body and mind. In his body a filthy ulcer broke out, wherein were bred an innumerable quantity of vermin continually flowing from it, and such a stench proceeding from thence, as neither those that attended him, nor even he himself could well ear: and in this condition he lay languishing and | Prideaux's Connection.

be capable of the administration.

The death of this prince was no sooner made known to the people, than Lysias declared Antiochus king, under the name of Eupator, having at that time the tuition of the young prince.

The Macedonians, in the mean time, who were then garrisoned in the citadel of Jerusalem, together with some Jewish revolters, made several sallies upon the Jews, as they went to worship in the temple; so Judas found it absolutely necessary to reduce that fort for the common security of the nation.

It was now just a hundred and fifty years, that this government had been in the family of Seleucus. Judas was so determined upon the accomplishment of his design, that he set to framing of machines and engines for battery, and the casting up of works.*

to secure the crown to him, when he should | While this was in agitation, several deserters escaped by night, and joining with others, went to Antiochus, setting forth the miserable condition to which

> Lest the earth break in and frustrate all their toil, Unable to sustain the tower's weight."

The prophet Habakkuk manifestly refers to the mount, in that prediction, where he describes the desolating march of the Chaldeans, and the success of their arms: 'They shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap up dust and take it. Moveable towers of wood were usually placed upon the mount, which were driven on wheels fixed within the bottom planks, to secure them from the enemy. Their size was not always the same, but proportioned to the towers of the city they besieged: the front was usually covered with tiles; and in later times the sides were likewise guarded with the same materials; their tops were covered with raw hides, and other things, to preserve them from fire balls and missive weapons; they were formed into several stories, which were able to carry both soldiers and several kinds of engines. All these modes of attack were practised in the days of Isaiah, who threatens Jerusalem with a siege conducted according to this method : 'And I will encamp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount; and I will raise forts against thee.' The prophet Ezekiel repeats the prediction in almost the same words, adding only the name of the engine which was to be employed in battering down the walls: 'Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem; and lay siege against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it; and set battering rams against it round about.'
The battering-ram was an engine with an iron head, resembling the head of a ram, with which they beat down the enemies' walls. Of this, Potter mentions three kinds; the first was plain and unartificial, being nothing but a long beam with an iron head, which the soldiers drove with main force against the wall; the second was hung with ropes to another beam, by the help of which they thrust it forward with much greater force; the third differed from the former only in being covered with a testudo, or shroud, to protect the soldiers that worked it, from the darts of the enemy. beam was sometimes no less than a hundred and twenty feet in length, and covered with iron plates. lest those who defended the walls should set it on fire; the head was armed with as many horns as they pleased. Josephus reports, that one of Vespasian's rams, the length of which was only fifty cubits, which came not up to the size of some of the Grecian rams, had an head as thick as ten men, and twenty-five horns, each of which was as thick as one man, and placed a cubit's distance from the rest; the weight hung, as was customary, upon the hinder part, was no less than one thousand and five hundred talents; when it was removed from one place to another, it was not taken in pieces; an hundred and fifty yoke of oxen, or three hundred pair of horses and mules

^{*} In attacking and defending cities, the Jews probably employed much the same means as the Greeks and Romans afterwards adopted, and carried to so great a state of perfection. The renowned warriors of Greece and Rome began their operations against a fortified town with lines of circumvallation, which sometimes consisted of a double wall or rampart, raised of turfs. The interior fortification was designed to prevent sudden and unexpected sallies from the town, and to deprive it of all possibility of succour from without; the exterior, to secure them from foreign enemies that might come to the relief of the besieged. The middle space, which was sixteen feet, was taken up with lodges for guards and sentinels, built at due distances from one another; yet so close, that at a distant view the whole pile appeared to be one broad wall, with turrets on both sides, after every tenth of which was a larger tower, extended from wall to wall. Another contrivance which the besiegers employed, was the agger or mount, which they raised so high as to equal, if not exceed, the top of the besieged walls: the sides were supported with broks or stones, or secured with strong rafters to hinder it from falling; the fore part only remained bare, because it was to be advanced by degrees nearer the city. The pile itself consisted of all sorts of materials, as earth, timber, boughs, stones; into the middle were cast also wickers, and twigs of trees to fasten, and as it were, cement the other parts. The whole fabric is thus described by Lucan :-

[&]quot;The groves are felled, and strongest timber sought; From thickest forests largest oaks are brought, To make strong rafters to support the pile,

their obedience to the king's command, in opposition to their own law, and that they were then in imminent danger of falling into the hands of Judas, without immediate relief.

The young prince gave orders to his friends and commanders to levy what auxiliaries were to be had for money over and above the greatest number of choice men that they could raise from among his own subjects.

His orders were executed with such diligence, that in a short time they mustered a hundred thousand foot, twenty

laboured in drawing it; and no less than fifteen hundred men employed their utmost strength in forcing it against the walls. At other times, we find these rams driven upon wheels. Such was the formidable engine, of which the prophet warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and which in the hands of the Romans, levelled at last the walls of that proud metropolis with the ground. To this may be added, various engines for casting arrows, darts, and stones of a larger size; of which the most remarkable was the balista, which hurled stones of a size not less than mill-stones, with so great violence as to dash whole houses in pieces at a blow. These powerful engines, invented by Jewish artists, and worked by the skill and vigour of Jewish soldiers, were undoubtedly the prototypes of those which the celebrated nations of Greece and Rome afterwards employed with so much success in their sieges. The testudo, or tortoise, was a defensive invention, which received its name from covering and sheltering the soldiers from the weapons of their enemies, as a tortoise is covered by its shell. Ancient authors describe several kinds of it; but the one to which the sacred writer seems to allude, is the testudo militaris, used in the field of battle, but more frequently in surprising cities, before the inhabitants were apprized of their danger, and prepared for their defence, which served to protect the besiegers in their approach to the walls. When the testudo was formed, the soldiers drew up close to one another, and the hindermost ranks bowing themselves, placed their targets above their heads; the first rank stood erect, the rest stooped lower and lower by degrees, till the last rank kneeled upon the ground; the men in the front and on the sides holding their targets before their bodies, the rest covering the heads of those who were placed before them; so that the whole body resembled a pent-house or roof, covered with tiles, down which the enemy's missile weapons easily glided, without prejudice to the soldiers beneath. Under the protection of their bucklers, the soldiers mounted upon the shoulders of one another till they reached the top of the wall; or they endeavoured singly to climb it, wherever they could find a hold, or a place less vigilantly guarded.—Script. Illust.

they were reduced by their own tribe, for | thousand horses, and two and thirty elephants.* With this formidable army, under the command of Lysias, the king marched out of Antioch, advanced to

> * The elephant is a native of Africa and Asia, being found neither in Europe nor America. In Africa he still retains his natural liberty. The savage inhabitants of that part of the world, instead of attempting to subdue this powerful creature to their necessities, are happy in being able to protect themselves from his fury. Formerly, indeed, during the splendour of the Carthaginian empire, elephants were used in their wars; but this was only a transitory gleam of human power in that part of the globe; the natives of Africa have long since degenerated, and the elephant is only known among them from his devastations. But, although these animals are most plentiful in Africa, it is only in Asia that the greatest ele-phants are found, and rendered subservient to human command. Some of these creatures have been known to carry two cannons, fastened together by a cable, of three thousand pounds weight each, for five hundred paces together, with their tusks; and we have no reason to doubt but they are able to carry a much greater weight upon their backs. It is no wonder therefore, that creatures of this prodigious strength, when the method of fighting was chiefly by force, should be made use of in all military expeditions. A century or two ago, a great part of the dependence of the general was upon the number and expertness of his elephants; but of late, since war has been contented to adopt fatal instead of formidable arts, the elephant is little used, except for drawing cannon, or transporting provisions. The princes of the country are pleased to keep a few for ornament, or for the purposes of removing their seraglios; but they are seldom led into a field of battle, where they are unable to withstand the discharge of fire-arms, and have often been found to turn upon their employers. Still, however, they are used in war, in the more remoter parts of the East; in Siam, in Cochin-China, in Tonquin, and Pegu. In all these places they not only serve to swell the pomp of state, being adorned with all the barbarian splendour that those countries can bestow, but they are actually led into the field of battle, armed before with coats of mail, and loaded on the back each with a square tower, containing from five combatants to seven. Upon its neck sits the conductor, who goads the animal into the thickest ranks, and encourages it to increase the devastation: wherever it goes, nothing can withstand its fury; it levels the ranks with its immense bulk, flings such as oppose it into the air, or crushes them to death under its feet. In the meantime those who are placed upon its back combat as from an eminence, and fling down their weapons with double force, their weight being added to their velocity. Nothing, therefore, can be more dreadful, or more irresistible, than such a moving machine, to men unacquainted with the modern arts of war; the elephant thus armed and conducted, raging in the midst of the field of battle, inspires more terror than even those machines that destroy at a distance, and are often most fatal

Bethsura, a place well fortified, and spent much time before it; for, between sallies and stratagems, the besieged found means to defeat all the attempts of the enemy.

Judas being informed of the approach of Antiochus, raised the siege, and marching to meet the enemy, pitched his camp in a certain place called the straits of Beth-zacharias, about seventy furlongs from the adversary.

Antiochus upon this quitted the Bethsurites, and encamped a short distance from Judas, appointing his army, by break of day, to put themselves upon their march in order of battle. But the straits being too narrow for the elephants to march in front, they were forced into the defile with a thousand foot and five hundred horse upon the guard of every elephant, and so to advance one after another with a kind of tower or castle upon their backs, charg-

when most unseen. But this method of combating is rather formidable than effectual: polished nations have ever been victorious over these semi-barbarous troops that have called in the elephant to their assistance or attempted to gain a victory by merely astonishing their opposers. The Romans quickly learned the art of opening their ranks to admit the elephant, and thus separating it from assistance, quickly compelled its conduc-tors to calm the animal's fury, and to submit. It sometimes also happened that the elephant became impatient of control; and, instead of obeying its conductor, turned upon those forces it was employed to assist. In either case, there was a great deal of preparation to very little effect, for a single elephant is known to consume as much as forty men in a day. In the books of the Maccabees, we find frequent mention made of elephants, because, after the reign of Alexander the Great, these animals were very much employed in the armies which the kings of Syria and Egypt raised. They were naturally of a very quiet and gentle disposition, and never made use of their strength but when they were irritated, or compelled to it; and for this reason, we find that the elephants which were in the army of Antiochus Eupator, had the blood of grapes and mulberries shown them, thereby to animate them to the combat, I Maccab. vi. 34. and those which Ptolemy Philopater kept, were intoxicated with incense dipped in wine to make them more mad and furious. they are irritated and inflamed, their strength is prodigious and nothing can stand before them. Every creature that comes in their way, they trample under foot, and overthrow whole squadrons. - Goldsmith and Calmet.

Idumea, and from thence proceeded to ! ed with archers, while the rest of the troops mounted the hills on both sides, under the command of able officers.

> From this ascent they gave the attack, with so loud a shout that valleys resounded with the echo; at the same time the flashes of their gold and brazen bucklers exhibited a scene of astonishment and surprise.

> But all this was to Judas no more than empty pomp and noise; for he received them so bravely, that he killed near six hundred upon the first encounter.

> While they were thus engaged, Eleazar, otherwise called Savaran, the brother of Judas, taking notice of one elephant that was caparisoned with richer trappings* than the rest, he made his way with a generous resolution through all the guards to that beast, taking for granted, that the king was upon it.

> When he had cut part of his opposers to pieces on each hand and forced the rest to clear his passage, he crept under the belly of the elephant, and wounded it to death; himself also perished under the weight of the beast upon his fall. He had the honour however to die in the attempt of a glorious action, and encompassed with the dead bodies of his enemies.

Judas, finding himself so mightily exceeded in number, drew off to the siege of the fortress at Jerusalem again, when Antiochus sent one part of his army to sit down before Bethsura, and with the remainder of it went to Jerusalem.

The Bethsurites were so discouraged by the appearance of the king's troops, and so much more disheartened by their want of provisions, that they found them-

^{*} Though elephants have a hide impenetrable in almost every part except the belly, yet for their greater safety those used in battle were usually armed and covered all over as with a coat of mail. The kings of India, according to Quintus Curtius, when they took the field, were drawn by elephants all covered over with gold; and Florus has described the same animals, made use of in battles, glittering with gold, silver, purple, and their own ivory, harnessed and equipped much after the fashion of a war-horse. - Stackhouse.

selves under a necessity of delivering up the place, which they did upon conditions, with solemn articles that there should be no violence or molestation offered them whatever.

But the king kept his faith no farther than to the bare saving of their lives; for the inhabitants were all turned naked out of the town, and a garrison of his own fixed in their place. But the siege of the temple cost them much pains, through the resolute defence that was made; all their machines and approaches were eluded by counter-workings and designs.

Their only distress was want of bread; for having already spent their last year's store, and this happening to fall out upon the seventh year, when by the Jewish law they could neither plough nor sow, great numbers of the Jews deserted the town merely for want of provision, insomuch that there was scarcely numbers sufficient to defend the place.

The king and his general Lysias received intelligence that Philip had usurped the government, and was marching toward them at the head of an army out of Persia; so that they came to a secret resolution to quit the siege, seek him out, and give him battle; but to execute their design with such privacy, that neither officer nor soldier should so much as divine the intent. Wherefore the king ordered Lysias, without mentioning the name of Philip, to enter into a discourse with the commanders and soldiers concerning the siege, the strength of the place, the difficulty of the enterprise, and to observe to them upon the whole, that being reduced to a want of corn, and the king's business also requiring his presence elsewhere, they could not do better than to come to some sort of agreement with them upon condition of allowing them the free exercise of their particular religion, laws, and customs; and this point being given up, which had been the only ground of their rebellions, the king might return when he pleased, without any farther trouble.

This Lysias had in charge to communicate to the army, and the soldiers were highly pleased with the proposal.

Matters being thus concerted, Antiochus despatched a herald to Judas and the besieged, with an offer of peace, and a free enjoyment and exercise of their laws and customs, which they very readily agreed to, and, on the security of an oath for the performance of articles, delivered up the temple; but upon Antiochus's taking possession of it, he found the place so very strong, that without regard to his oath and promise, he ordered his soldiers to demolish the walls, and lay them level with the ground, which was executed accordingly, and so returned to Antioch, carrying the high-priest, Onias, otherwise called Menelaus, along with him.

This was done upon the advice of Lysias, who told him, that if ever he would render the Jews quiet, or himself at ease, that man must be taken off; for it was at his instigation that his father forced the Jews to a religion against their laws and consciences; and that Onias was consequently the author and promoter of all the evils that had befallen him.

The king upon this sent away Menelaus to Berea in Syria, where he caused him to be put to death, after ten years' enjoyment of the pontificate. He was a very wicked man, who, to secure the dignity to himself, caused a general defection among the Jews, from the laws and worship of their country. His next successor was Alcimus, who was also called Jacimus.

When Antiochus Eupator found that Philip had now usurped the government, he fought with him, and overcame him; took him prisoner, and ordered him to be put to death. But the son of the high-priest Onias being left an infant, by the death of Menelaus, finding that the king had conferred the dignity on Alcimus, who stood in no relation to the sacerdotal family, and was only overruled by Lysias in the transferring of it, fled into Egypt,

where he was graciously received, both by | ters in Judea, and to see what havoc Ju-Ptolemy and his queen Cleopatra, that at his request they bestowed a place of trust upon him in Heliopolis, where he erected a temple after the model of that at Jerusalem.

Demetrius the son of Seleucus having fled away from Rome,* took possession of Tripolis in Syria; and with as many mercenaries as he could get together, invaded the country, where the people did not only come over to him in great numbers, with open arms to receive him; but as a farther instance of an affection to his interest, seized upon the persons of Antiochus Eupator and Lysias, and brought them in custody to him. Upon this they were immediately both put to death by the command of Demetrius; Antiochus having now reigned two years. He had in his party a great number of profligate Jews, that had been banished for notorious crimes, together with Alcimus the highpriest, who all joined in one common accusation and complaint against the whole people of the Jews, but especially Judas Maccabeus and his brethren, whom they charged, not only with the destruction of as many of the king's friends as fell into their hands, but with the very ejection of themselves out of the land too. Wherefore they made it their request to Demetrius, only to send some particular person that he could confide in to examine matdas had made there.

Demetrius in a rage despatched upon this errand Bacchides, formerly a friend to Antiochus Epiphanes; he was a resolute man, and being at that time governor of Mesopotamia, despatched Alcimus with a commission to fall upon Judas and his followers. With these troops Bacchides left Antioch, and marched directly into Judea, where he gave Judas and his brethren a solemn invitation to come to a better understanding with him.

Now the only design was under the colour of a peaceable and friendly disposition, to draw them in and surprise them. But as he came at the head of an army, and in the posture of an enemy rather than a friend, Judas kept himself upon his guard, without giving any credit to his pretensions; though some credulous people went over to him, in confidence that their countryman Alcimus would do them no injury, especially as he had taken a solemn oath, that no violence should be offered, either to themselves, or any of their party. This confidence, however, deceived them; for Bacchides, without any regard to conscience, caused sixty of them to be cut to pieces; which barbarous perfidy served for a warning to the rest not to approach him.

Bacchides, after this, removed his army from Jerusalem and went to Bethzeth, where he found several deserters, and other disaffected people, which he put to the sword. This being done, he commanded all the Jews in his absence to obey Alcimus; and leaving part of his army with him for the security of the province, returned with the rest to king Demetrius at Antioch.

Alcimus during all these transactions had an eye to the pontificate, and reflecting that it was an honour hardly to be compassed but by the favour and goodwill of the people, betook himself to the popular arts of courtesy and affability, to ingratiate himself with the multitude: so

^{*} Demetrius, who was the son of Seleucus Philopater, and the rightful heir of the crown of Syria, had been kept as a hostage, and afterwards in an honourable captivity, at Rome, during the reign of his uncle Antiochus Epiphanes, on whose death he solicited the senate for leave to return to Syria, alleging, as an inducement, that having been bred up in that city from his childhood, he should always look upon Rome as his country. But that politic body, preferring a minor, like Eupator, on the throne of Syria to a prince in the prime of life, of considerable talents and ambition, refused his request: whereupon Demetrius privily escaped from Rome, and landed "with a few men," only eight friends and their servants, at Tripolis in Phænicia; was joined by several of his adherents under the persuasion that he was patronised by the Romans; and advanced to Antioch, where the army declared for him .-Dr Hales.

that by means of obliging speech and behaviour, he quickly doubled the number of the forces that were left him; but it was with a band of impious fugitives who enlisted themselves in his service; with these he ravaged the country, putting all the Jews to death wherever he came, that were friends to Maccabeus.

Judas, incensed at the depredations committed by a rabble army, headed by Alcimus, determined to retaliate on themselves the injuries they had offered; but Alcimus, sensible that he was not able to cope with Judas by himself, applied to Demetrius at Antioch, for succour, where he did all that was possible to irritate that prince against Judas, and to resent the indignities he had put upon him.

CHAPTER VII.

Treachery and blasphemy of Nicanor punished.

— The wickedness of Alcimus retaliated by a judicial vengeance.—Judas succeeds to the pontificate.—Enters into an alliance with the Romans.—Nobly espouses the cause of his countrymen, and is slain in battle.

Judas was now become so formidable, that Demetrius was very fearful of the consequence if he suffered him thus to increase in strength and credit; and so called Nicanor to him, who had been formerly his companion in his departure from Rome, and his particular confident and friend, and assigned him the command of such an army as he reckoned sufficient for the reducing of Judas, with positive orders to make war upon the whole nation, and give no quarter.

Upon his setting out for Jerusalem, he proposed to himself to dissemble his intentions, and try if he could inveigle Judas, under a show of friendship, into a credulity that would certainly be his ruin. Nicanor thus suggested the matter to him: "Why should we expose the sum of all our happiness to the uncertain chance of war, and not rather adjust the point in controversy by an amicable treaty? If you apprehend any danger in it, J am Calmet.

ready to give you the most sacred oath of security, that one man can give to another; for peace is all my business."

This declaration wrought so far upon Judas and his brethren, that, without any suspicion of deceit, they gave him assurances of friendship, and with great frankness received Nicanor with his whole army. After the first greeting between Judas and Nicanor, the latter gave a signal to his people to seize him, but he perceived the treachery, and made his escape to his own people: so after the detection of this plot, both parties prepared to decide the quarrel by open force, without any further mention of a treaty. The armies drew out, and came to a battle near Capharsalama,* where Judas was worsted, and forced into the castle of Jerusalem.

It happened one day, as Nicanor was passing by the temple, that several of the priests and elders met him, and showed him the sacrifices that they were about to offer to God for the prosperity and welfare of Demetrius.

Nicanor threatened them, and even uttered blasphemous revilings against God himself; declaring that if the people did not deliver up Judas to him, he would return to their sorrow and cost; destroy the temple, and leave it in ashes.

With these menaces he departed; but the priests were so dejected at this declaration, that they forthwith addressed themselves to God with prayers and tears, to protect his own house, and his ministers that belonged to it, against the outrages of the enemy.

Nicanor departed from Jerusalem and pitched his tent in Bethoron, where he was joined by a great reinforcement out of Syria. Judas at the same time encamped at Adasi, thirty furlongs distant from the enemy, having with him a body, only of

^{*} The same perhaps as Caphar-semelia, not far from Jerusalem. The Hebrew word Caphar signifies a field or village; it is often used in composition with other words as a proper name.—

Calmet.

a thousand men. He told them that the enemy indeed was numerous, but that the cause was God's, whose power was above that of a multitude; exhorting them not to trouble themselves concerning the apparent superiority of the army they were to encounter, but to fall on like men of courage and resolution, and commit the issue to God.

In fine, it came to a battle; and the first encounter was very vigorous; but upon the fall of great numbers of the enemy, and of Nicanor too, who did all that could be done by a great commander, and a brave man, the whole army scattered; and upon the loss of their general, cast away their arms, in order to make them lighter for their flight. Judas in the mean time pursuing the fugitives without mercy, made proclamation by sound of trumpet, through all the towns and cities where he passed, of the victory he obtained.

Upon this signal the country people gathered together, and fell so unmercifully upon the soldiers in their flight, that of nine thousand men, which was the number of their army, there was not a man that escaped. The Jews, after this victory, had an interval of peace, but it lasted not long.

Alcimus was extremely desirous of having the old wall of the sanctuary pulled down, which had been built by the ancient prophets; but in the very instant of his ordering it to be done, God struck him with so potent a disease, that he fell upon the ground speechless, where he languished in great torments, and then died, after being four years in the office of the pontificate. The people upon his decease unanimously chose Judas as his successor.

The new high-priest had heard so much of the fame and power of the Romans, and of the overthrows they had given the Gauls, Spaniards, Carthaginians, nay, to Greece itself, and king Perseus, Philip and Antiochus, that he had a mighty desire to enter into a league with them; accordingly he sent Eupolemus the son of

John, and Jason the son of Eleazar, two particular friends, to Rome upon an embassy, soliciting to be received into the number of their allies, and that they would write to Demetrius, to forbear making war with the Jews on any pretence for the future.

The senate was so well pleased with the proposal that they consented to the league, and passed an order soon after in favour of it, which was written on tables of brass; the copy of it was sent to Jerusalem, and the original deposited in the capital. The decree was to this effect: "That no people whatsoever, under the jurisdiction of the Romans, should presume to make war upon the Jews, or to assist any of their enemies with corn, shipping, money, or the like, and the same obligation to lie reciprocally upon the Jews, in case of any war made upon the Romans. If there should be any thing after this, which the Jews would have to be added or taken away, it shall be first ratified by the common consent of the Romans."

This decree was written by Eupolemus, Jason, Judas the high-priest, and his brother Simon, general of the army. This was the first alliance that ever was made between the Jews and the Romans.

Upon the report of Nicanor's death, and the defeat of of the army, Demetrius sent Bacchides a second time into Judea, who advanced with fresh troops to Arbela,* a town in Galilee, and there encamped, forcing a great many Jews out of the caves there, where they had hid themselves.

From hence he hastened away to Jerusalem; and upon intelligence that Judas

^{*} Arbela, or Arbah-el, signifies fine countries, countries of God: for which reason, we find many places so named in Palestine. It is said, I Macc. ix. 2. that Bacchides and Alcimus came into Galiee, and encamped at Maseloth, which is in Arbela. The city Masal, or Misheal, was in the tribe of Asher, near to which were very fine fields, and a place called Arbela, Josh. xix. 26.—Eusebius and Jerome mention a city of this name, in the great plain, nine miles from Legio, probably east; and the former writer mentions another belonging to the region of Pella.—Caimet.

immediately with twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse to encounter him, who had at that time but three thousand men with him, and these being terrified at the numerous army under Bacchides, left their camp and fled, excepting eight hundred.

In this want of men and time for recruiting, Judas maintained his resolution in despite of all difficulties, of putting it to the fate of a battle, only desiring his men to stand by him and follow his example. They represented to him, how vain and rash a thing it would be to contend with such insupportable odds, advising him rather to attempt an honourable retreat, by which means possibly he might reinforce himself. But he declared, "That it should never be said, that the sun ever saw Judas turn his back upon an enemy. If it should be our lot now to die, God's will be done, provided that we do not tarnish the reputation of a glorious life by an ignominous death."

With these words he roused the courage of his soldiers and animated them for the combat.

Bacchides having ranged his army, placed the horse upon the two wings, whereof he himself commanded the right, his light armed men and archers in the front, supported by a Macedonian phalanx* in the body. In this order of bat-

* The Macedonian phalanx was a body of infantry, consisting of 16,000 heavy-armed troops, who were always placed in the centre of the battle. Besides a sword, they were armed with a shield, and a pike or spear twenty-one feet long. The phalanx was commonly divided into ten battalions, each of which was composed of 1600 men, drawn up 100 in front, and sixteen in depth. Sometimes the file of sixteen was doubled, and sometimes divided, according as the occasion required; so that the phalanx was sometimes but eight, and at other times thirty-two deep; but its usual and regular depth was of sixteen. The space between each soldier upon a march was six feet, or, which is the same, four cubits; and the ranks were also about six feet asunder. When the phalanx advanced towards an enemy, there was but three feet distant between every soldier, and the ranks were closed in proportion. In | Rollin.

and his people were at Berezeth, posted the advanced to the enemy, sounding a charge, and with a military shout, according to custom, gave the onset,-Judas encountering him on the other hand after the same manner.

> The engagement was maintained with great vigour on both sides, from morning till towards sunset; when Judas taking

> fine, when the phalanx was to deceive the enemy, the men who composed it drew still closer, each soldier occupying only the space of a foot and a half. This evidently shows the different space which the front of the phalanx took up in these three cases, supposing the whole to consist of 16,000 men, at sixteen deep, and consequently always 1000 men in front. This space in the first case was 6000 feet, or 1000 fathoms, which make ten furlongs, or half a league. In the second case it was but half so much, and took up five furlongs, or 500 fathoms. And in the third case, it was again diminished another half, and extended to the distance of only two furlongs and a half, or 250 fathoms. Polybius examines the phalanx in the second case, in which it marched to attack the enemy. Each soldier then took up three feet in breadth, and as many in depth. We observed above, that their pikes were fourteen cubits long. The space between the two hands, and that part of the pike which projected beyond the right, took up four; and consequently the pike advanced ten cubits be-yond the body of the soldier who carried it. This being supposed, the pikes of the soldiers placed in the fifth rank, whom I will call the fifths, and so of the rest, projected two cubits beyond the first rank; the pikes of the fourths four, those of the thirds six, those of the seconds eight cubits; in fine, the pikes of the soldiers who formed the first rank advanced ten cubits towards the enemy. The reader will easily conceive, that when the soldiers who composed the phalanx, this great and unwieldy machine, every part of which bristled with pikes, as we have seen, moved all at once, presenting their pikes to attack the enemy, that they must charge with great force. The soldiers who were behind the fifth rank held their pikes raised, but inclining a little over the ranks who preceded them; thereby forming a kind of roof, which (not to mention their shields) secured them from the darts discharged at a distance, which fell without doing them any hurt. The soldiers of all the other ranks beyond the fifth could not indeed engage against the enemy, nor reach them with their pikes, but then they gave great assistance in battle to those in the front of them. For by supporting them behind with their utmost strength, and pressing upon their backs, they increased in a prodigious manner the strength and impetuosity of the onset; they gave their com-rades such firmness and stability as rendered them immoveable in attacks, and at the same time deprived them of ever hope or opportuni-ty of flight by the rear; so that they were under the necessity either to conquer or die.—

notice of the danger his men were in, of being overpowered by the enemy's right wing, where Bacchides, with the flower of the army, fiercely assailed them, came in with a band of valiant and courageous youths to their relief; and breaking their line, pierced into the very body of them, routed, and gave them chase as far as mount Aza.

The enemy's left wing upon this followed Judas so closely, that he was now beset on all hands, and out of all possibility of escaping; yet he and his people stood their ground, and bravely resolved to sell their lives as dear as possible; after a great slaughter of their enemies, Judas and his companions were so wearied out, that they seemed at last to be rather spent than overcome. Thus did this glorious hero finish the character of a great man, by making his life and death correspond in point of true valour.

It could not be expected that the soldiers, after the loss of so brave a general, could dispute the point any further without a leader. So they presently dispersed, while the two brothers, Simon and Jonathan, treated with the enemy for the body of their brother, which they carried away, and laid it at Modin in the sepulchre of his fathers, with all funeral magnificence, and with the solemnity of a public mourning for several days, in honour of his memory, according to the custom of the place upon so extraordinary an occasion.

This was the end of Judas Maccabeus, a generous, and a valiant man, the true son of the virtue as well as the blood of Mattathias; for he never forgot the precepts of his dying father, who enjoined him upon his blessing never to decline labour or hazard for the liberty and welfare of his countrymen.

In pursuance of this charge, he acquired everlasting honour, by the rescue of his friends out of the hands of the Macedonians, and by his three years' administration in the office of high-priest.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK IX.

FROM THE DEATH OF JUDAS MACCABEUS TO THE DEATH OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE Jews from the time of the captivity are no more to be looked upon as that free, rich, and glorious people, which they had been either under their former theocracy, as Josephus rightly terms it, or under their opulent and warlike monarchs, and direction of their prophets. Their condition, government, manners, yea, every thing but their religion, were entirely changed. They had enjoyed nearly three centuries of almost uninterrupted prosperity prior to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, when they were most cruelly oppressed and compelled to take up arms in their own defence. Under the able conduct of Judas Maccabeus and his valiant brothers, the Jews maintained a religious war for twenty-six years, with five successive kings of Syria; and after destroying two hundred thousand of their best troops the Maccabees finally established the independence of their own country, and the aggrandizement of their This illustrious house, whose family. princes united the regal and pontifical dignity in their own persons, administered the affairs of the Jews during a period of one hundred and twenty-six years, until, disputes arising between Hyrcanus and his brother Aristobulus, the latter was

defeated by the Romans under Pompey, who captured Jerusalem, and reduced Judea to a tributary province of the republic. The last of the Asmonean family was conquered and deposed by Herod the Great, an Idumean by birth, but of the Jewish religion, who had been appointed king of the Jews by the Romans, and enjoyed a long reign over Palestine, in the course of which he greatly reduced the civil power of the high-priests. During the reign of the Maccabean princes, however, an evil, pernicious in its effects on genuine religion, sprung up among the Jews,-they being no longer under the corrective influence of the schools of the prophets, whence in olden time had emanated such lofty inspiration, simple piety, and pure morality. Then appeared the worldly-minded Sadducees, misinterpreting the pure and ennobling precepts of the Mosaic law, and admitting no felicity but that which may be enjoyed in this life. Opposed to these were the subtle Pharisees, who divested the law of its simplicity and purity, and superadded to it a number of pernicious doctrines, said to have been preserved by tradition from Moses, and to which they adhered more strictly than to the law itself, though often contrary to what the latter enjoined. These powerful but opposing sects acquired great

importance in the state, and their opinions and observances had the tendency of diverting the minds of the people from the essence of religion—the pure and spiritual worship of God—and attaching them to a number of unmeaning and in some instances immoral ceremonies.

CHAPTER I.

Judas is succeeded by Jonathan, who maintains the opposition against Bacchides with various success, till they enter into an alliance.—Jonathan forms a treaty with Demetrius.—Fortifies Jerusalem.—Is shown great favours by Alexander Balas, who opposes Demetrius.— Death of that prince.

It has been already observed, that Judas, the mighty captain and valiant defender of the Jews, after several bloody battles fought in that righteous cause, lost his life in this magnanimous contest.

This illustrious person was no sooner taken off, than the whole party of the profligate Jews, that, contrary to conscience, faith, and honour, had abandoned the religion, laws, and customs of the nation, resumed their former animosities, and persecuted their honest countrymen more spitefully than ever.

There happened also at the same time a general famine, which doubled the other calamity; for, between want of bread on the one hand, and want of power to defend themselves against their enemies on the other, the misery lay so heavy upon them, that a great many of the Jews found themselves under some necessity to comply with the faction of the Macedonians.

Upon this juncture, Bacchides convened all the apostate Jews that were gone over to strange goes and committed the care of the government principally into their hands, who made it their business, in the first place, to seize all the friends and late partizans of Judas, and thereby deliver them to Bacchides, to torture them at pleasure, and in the end put every man to death.

The condition of the Jews was never

more deplorable since their captivity in Babylon as it was at this time; insomuch, that all those who had wished well to Judas, joined in a request to Jonathan, not only to follow his brother's example, who had so frankly sacrificed his blood for the liberties of his country, but to take upon himself his command also, the whole nation lying under such desperate circumstances, that they must be all inevitably lost without a leader.

His answer was, that he was ready to do or suffer any thing for the public good; whereupon, with the unanimous consent of the people, he was declared their general.

When Bacchides came to be informed of this choice, and to reflect that Jonathan was as likely to give as much trouble and disturbance to the king and Macedonians as his brother Judas, he determined to take him off by treachery. But he and his brother Simon were both so well aware of such a design, that they provided for themselves betimes, by withdrawing into the neighbouring desert with what strength they were able to get together, and pitched their tents by the lake of Asphar.*

Bacchides looking upon this retreat into the wilderness as the effect of fear, and no other than a direct flight from the face of an enemy, marched toward them with all his troops, and encamped beyond Jordan, making choice of that place for his rendezyous.

When Jonathan came to hear of this motion, he sent his brother to the Nabathean Arabs, being in friendship with them, for leave to deposit their baggage in their custody, till the battle with Bacchides should be decided.

But as he was upon the way, the sons of Amaraus made a sally out to Medaba upon the convoy; took all their carriages, and whatever else they had about them, and killed John upon the spot, and all his company.

^{*} This lake was in the district of Tekoah, which Calmet takes to be the Dead sea.

Bacchides having intelligence that Jonathan lay encamped in the fenny grounds near the river Jordan, pitched upon the sabbath-day for the attack, in confidence of their remaining inactive on account of the reverence they had for that day. But Jonathan laying before his soldiers the absolute necessity of fighting; the enemy being before them, and the river behind them, there was no saving their lives without it; and, considering the exigence of the case, they called upon God for victory, and in the same instant resolutely charged the enemy, killing great numbers of them upon the spot.

In the heat of this action, Bacchides pressed furiously upon the person of Jonathan, who at the same time made a blow at him; but the other evading it, Jonathan and his company took to the river, and the enemy not daring to follow them, they got safe to the other side.

Bacchides, after this withdrew into the citadel of Jerusalem, with the loss of about two thousand of his men. He also fortified several strong cities and places whose wall had been demolished, as Jericho, Emmaus, Bethoron, Bethel, Thamnatha, Pharathoni, Taphon, and Gazara. These places he strengthened with walls and towers, which he strongly garrisoned, that from thence they might make excursions, and attack the Jews. But care was taken above all the rest, to make the citadel of Jerusalem impregnable; in which place the sons of the principal men of the country were secured as hostages.

Intelligence arrived about this time, to the two other brothers, Jonathan and Simon, that there was a splendid wedding on treaty, between one of the sons of Amaraus, and the daughter of an illustrious noble of Canaan; the sons of Amaraus were to be at the wedding, and the bride to be conducted in great pomp from the city of Gabatha.*

The brothers embraced this opportunity to revenge themselves for the death of their brother, and hastened away towards Medaba, to trepan the people who were

give something additional, as characteristic of the customs observed on these occasions. The Greeks were decked with garlands of various herbs and flowers on their marriage-day; whence Clytemnestra, in Euripides, speaks thus to Achilles about her daughter Iphigenia: "But oh, in vain, though I had crowned her to be wedded to thee. The hair of a Roman bride was also crowned with flowers, after being divided into six locks with the point of a spear. This very ancient practice of crowning the bridegroom and the bride, has been continued among the members of the Greek church in Egypt, to our own times. The marriage-ceremony among the Jews was commonly performed in a garden, or in the open air; the bride was placed under a canopy, supported by four youths, and adorned with jewels according to the rank of the married persons; all the company crying out with joyful acclamations, 'Blessed be he that cometh.' It was anciently the custom, at the conclusion of the ceremony, for the father and mother, and kindred of the woman, to pray for a blessing upon the par-ties. After the benedictions, the bride is conducted, with great pomp, to the house of her husband; this is usually done in the evening; and as the procession moved along, money, sweatmeats, flowers, and other articles, were thrown among the populace, which they caught in cloths made for such occasions, stretched in a particular man-ner upon frames. The use of perfumes at eastern marriages is common; and upon great occasions very profuse. Not only are the garments scented, till, in the Psalmist's language, they smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; it is also customary for virgins to meet, and lead the procession, with silver gilt pots of perfumes; and sometimes aromatics are burned in the windows of all the houses in the streets through which the procession is to pass, till the air becomes loaded with fragrant odours. In allusion to this practice it is demanded, 'Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?" So liberally were these rich perfumes burned on this occasion, that a pillar of smoke ascended from the censers, so high, that it could be seen at a considerable distance; and the perfume was so rich as to equal in value and fragrance all the powders of the merchant. The custom of burning perfumes on these occasions, still continues in the East; for Lady Mary Wortley Montague, describing the re-ception of a young Turkish bride at the bagnio, says, "Two virgins met her at the door; two others filled silver gilt pots with perfunes, and began the procession, the rest following in pairs to the number of thirty. In this order they marched round the three rooms of the bagnio." And Maillet informs us, that when the ambassadors of an Eastern monarch, sent to propose marriage to an Egyptian queen, made their entrance into the capital of that kingdom, the streets through which they passed were strewed with flowers, and precious odours burning in the windows, from very early in the

^{*} Having in a previous note adverted to some of the distinctive peculiarities connected with the marriage festivals of the Orientals, we shall here

to assist at the wedding, into an ambush the party sallied out upon them, and cut his bride, and a long train of their friends,

morning, embalmed the air. It was the custom among the ancient Greeks, and the nations around them, to conduct the new-married couple with torches and lamps to their dwelling, as appears from the messenger in Euripides, who says, he called to mind the time when he bore torches before Menelaus and Helena. These torches were usually carried by servants; and the procession was some-times attended with singers and dancers. Thus Homer, in his description of the shield of Achilles : "In one (of the sculptured cities) nuptials were celebrating, and solemn feasts; through the city they conducted the new-married pair from their chambers, with flaming torches, while frequent shouts of Hymen burst from the attending throng, and young men danced in skilful measures to the sound of the pipe and the harp." A similar custom is observed among the Hindoos. The husband and wife, on the day of their marriage, being both in the same palanquin, go about seven and eight o'clock at night, accompanied with all their kindred and friends; the trumpets and drums go before them; and they are lighted by a number of flambeaux; immediately before the palanquin, walk many women, whose business it is to sing verses, in which they wish them all manner of prosperity. They march in this equipage through the streets, for the space of some hours, after which they return to their own house, where the domestics are in waiting. The whole house is illumined with small lamps; and many of those flambeaux already mentioned, are kept ready for their arrival, besides those which accompany them, and are carried before the palanquin. These flambeaux are composed of many pieces of old linen, squeezed hard against one another in a round figure, and thrust down into a mould of copper. The persons that hold them in one hand, have in the other a bottle of the same metal with the copper mould, which is full of oil, which they take care to pour out from time to time upon the linen, which otherwise gives no light. The Roman ladies also were led home to their husbands in the evening by the light of torches. A Jewish marriage seems to have been conducted in much the same way; for in that beautiful Psalm, where David describes the ma-jesty of Christ's kingdom, we meet with this pas-sage: 'And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour. The king's daughter is allglorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work; the virgins, her companions that fol-low her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.' Among the Jews, the bridegroom was not always permitted to accompany his bride from her father's house; an intimate friend was often sent to conduct her, while he remained at home to receive her in his apartment. Her female attendants had the honour to introduce her; and whenever they changed the

that they had planted in the mountains. them all off, without saving so much as Upon the arrival of the bridegroom with one person, with their wives, children, and friends, to the number of four hundred; carrying off the booty entire. After which exploit they returned to their quarters at Jordan.

> When Bacchides had settled garrisons in Judea, he returned to his master; and for about two years the Jews enjoyed some tranquillity.

> But the apostate Jews, envying the repose of Jonathan and his party, solicited Demetrius, by their proxies, that Bacchides might be ordered to reduce Jonathan, representing it as a thing so easily to be effected, that it required no more than one night's work to rid themselves both of him and all his soldiers by surprise.

> The king immediately yielded to the proposition, and despatched Bacchides into Judea upon the commission, where he sent his letters to all the king's friends and officers, to give their assistance toward the seizing of Jonathan.

> They joined in council to concert measures to insnare him; and finding upon several trials that all proved ineffectual. (for Jonathan was cautious,) the Macedonian, in a transport of rage, imputed the

> bride's dress, which is often done, they presented her to the bridegroom. It is the custom, and be-longs to their ideas of magnificence, frequently to dress and undress the bride; and to cause her to wear on that same day all the clothes made up for her nuptials. For the same reason the bride-groom's dress is less frequently changed. These circumstances discover the propriety and force of John's language, in his magnificent description of the Jewish church in her millennial state: And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' The arrival of the bride at the house of her husband, was followed by the marriage feast, at which they indulged in great mirth and hilarity. It was made entirely at the expense of the bridegroom; thus Homer sings;

"A shot-free banquet, or a marriage feast, Not such as is by contribution made."

This feast was called the nuptial joy, with which no other was to be intermixed; all labour ceased while it continued, and no sign of mourning or sorrow was permitted to appear .- Paxton.

whole miscarriage to the treachery of the apostate Jews; who, he said, sported with the king's orders, and thereupon put fifty of their chief men to death.

Jonathan and his brother, finding themselves too weak for Bacchides, withdrew into the wilderness, to a village called Bethbasi, and fortified it, in order to serve them for a place of retreat.

Upon this intelligence, Bacchides marched against them with all the power he was able to raise; and he opened his trenches immediately against the place, and for some days carried on his approaches, Jonathan, on the other side, making a

very obstinate resistance.

While affairs were thus circumstanced, he left the defence of the place to his brother, and with all the force he could draw together out of the neighbourhood, stole away by night, fell upon Bacchides in his quarters, and, from the havoc and confusion that ensued, killed a great number of his men; at this juncture, Simon, hearing of his brother's slaughter, made a sally, burnt their machines, cut off a great number of their people, and afterwards returned.

Bacchides was so alarmed at this assault upon his front and rear, and their miscarriage of an attempt he thought himself so sure of, that for some time it nearly deprived him of his reason. But all the mischiefs of this miscarriage were imputed to the Jewish impostors, who had prevailed with the king to undertake this expedition. It remained now only to consider how the siege might be raised without loss of honour, both to the king and himself, and to draw off without disgrace.

While Bacchides was deliberating on the affair, Jonathan embraced this opportunity of accomplishing his design so essential to the true interest of the Jews. With this view he sent him an honourable embassy, with proposals of a mutual league and friendship, on condition of releasing the prisoners on both sides. This was a

motion so reasonable in itself, and so opportune for quitting the siege without loss of reputation, that he immediately entered into an alliance with Jonathan; so they mutually exchanged oaths to deliver up and restore all prisoners on both sides, and not to commit any act of hostility one to another. The treaty being ratified, Bacchides returned to the king at Antioch, without coming back with his army to Judea.

Jonathan being now settled in a state of peace and safety, took up his abode in Machmas,* where he applied himself to the administration of law and justice. He was a bitter enemy to deserters, a zealous asserter of the laws, and purged the land from all foreign abominations.

In the year one hundred and sixty of the Seleucidæ, Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, † seized Ptolemais in

* That is, Michmash, a town about nine miles to the north of Jerusalem; there he governed Israel according to the law; cut off all that apostatized from it; restored again justice and right-eousness in the land; and reformed, as far as he could, all that was amiss either in church or state.

_Dean Prideaux.

⁺ In the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, one Heraclides was his treasurer in the province of Babylon, while his brother Timarchus, another favourite of the king's, was governor of it; but, on the coming of Demetrius to the crown, they were both found guilty of great misdemeanors, for which Timarchus was put to death, but Heraclides made his escape out of the kingdom, and took up his residence at Rhodes. While he was there, Demetrius, having given himself up entirely to luxury and sloth, so neglected the affairs of government, that his subjects justly took a disgust against him, and were ready to enter into any conspiracy to depose him; which Heraclides understanding, in hopes of making a revolution in favour of himself, he contrived this plot .- In the isle of Rhodes there was a youth, of a very mean and obscure condition, called Balas, but in other respects every way fit for his purpose. Him he prevailed with to pass for the son of Antiochus Epiphanes; and having thoroughly instructed him how to act his part, he carried him to Rome, where, by his craft and earnest solicitations, he not only prevailed with the senate to own him, but procured a decree from them likewise, permitting him to recover the kingdom of Syria out of the hands of Demetrius, and promising their assistance in doing it. By virtue of this decree he raised forces, and with them sailing to Ptolemais in Palestine, seized that city; and there, by the name of Alexander, son of Antiochus Epiphanes, took upon him to be

Syria, through the confederacy of the sol- safe for them to stir out of their holds and diers, whose aversion he had excited by a proud, arrogant behaviour, as well as a peculiar indolence of disposition, which caused him to neglect the affairs of state, and devote himself entirely to ease and indul-

.But the news of Alexander's being in Ptolemais roused Demetrius from his lethargy, and prompted him with all expedition to gather his forces, and march against him. Demetrius, thus embarrassed, sent an embassy to Jonathan, with proposals of an alliance; this he did in order to anticipate any treaty that he might enter into with Alexander, which would redound to his disadvantage. The purport of the message was, that he should levy men, provide arms, and set the hostages at liberty that Bacchides had committed prisoners to the citadel.

Upon the receipt of this order from Demetrius, Jonathan went to Jerusalem, where he read it publicly, in the hearing of the garrison and of the people. The fugitives in the citadel were very much surprised to see Jonathan on a sudden so much in favour with Demetrius.

He went on, however, with his levies, set the hostages at liberty, and remanded them safe back to their parents. He made Jerusalem, for the present, the place of his residence, which he fortified, altered, and repaired at pleasure; rebuilding and strengthening the walls, with large square stones for the better defence of the

The Macedonians that were dispersed up and down in several garrisons, quitted their stations upon this change at Jerusalem, and went away to Antioch. But as for those that were in Bethsura, and at the tower in Jerusalem, the major part of them being Jewish deserters, it was not

lurking places.

Alexander was no stranger to the character of Jonathan, and particularly to his military exploits against the Macedonians. nor the indignities they had put upon him, both by Demetrius and Bacchides; so that being told of the fair promises of Demetrius, he laid the matter before his friends, who gave it as their opinion, that the best measure he could pursue at that time, was to enter into an alliance with Jonathan, a person of eminent valour, and a mortal enemy to Demetrius, for divers causes. Upon this a resolution was formed, with the advice of council, for an application to Jonathan, which was couched in the following terms:

"King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, sendeth greeting.-Whereas we have been long since given to understand, that thou art a man of honour, faith, and courage, and in every respect worthy of our friendship, we have now sent our ambassadors to make thee a tender of our amity and alliance, and to treat in our name about it. We do by these presents, and by our royal authority, ordain and pronounce thee to be the high-priest* of the Jews, and adopt thee into the roll of the king's friends; sending thee for a

king of Syria. Great numbers, out of disaffection to Demetrius, flocked to him; so that, at length, Demetrius being defeated and slain, Alexander obtained the full possession of the Syrian empire. -Prideaux's Connection.

^{*} From the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity, the office of high-priest had been in the family of Jozadack, and in a lineal descent was transmitted down to Onias, the third of that name. He was supplanted by Jason his brother, as Jason was by his brother Menelaus, and after the death of Menelaus, Alcimus, who was of a different family, was put into the office by the command of the king of Syria. Whether the Asmonæans were of the race of Jozadack or not, it is no where said, but it is certain that they were of the course of Joarib, 1 Maccab. ii. 1. which was the first class of the sons of Aaron; and therefore, upon the failure of the former pontifical family, they had the best right to succeed. With this right it was, that Jonathan took the office; and in his family it became settled, and continued for several descents, until the time of Herod, who, from an office of inheritance, changed it into that of arbitrary will and pleasure. Whoever had the power after him, put the high-priests in or out, as they thought fit, till at length the office was extinguished by the destruction of the temple by the Romans - Prideaux's Connection.

crown of gold, not doubting but that our affection and esteem Il be answered on

thy part with a suitable return."

Jonathan, upon the arrival of this message, put on his sacerdotal robes, at the time of the feast of tabernacles. was eight years after the death of his brother Judas, the pontifical seat having been so long vacant, and from thence forward he applied himself to the improvement of his military power.

Demetrius was by this time sensible of the error of his delay, in neglecting the opportunity of being beforehand with his competitor for an alliance with Jonathan.

However, the anticipation of Alexander did not yet hinder him from carrying it as far as it would go, in the following letter:

"King Demetrius to Jonathan, and to the people of the Jews, greeting .- Whereas we have hitherto ever found you true and faithful to your duty and to our service, in despite of all the arts and practices of our enemies to seduce you from your allegiance, we cannot but give you some instance of the esteem we have for your unshaken fidelity in times past, and likewise of our ardent desire to give you all encouragement to persevere in the same for the time to come. It is our pleasure, therefore, to remit the greatest part of your tributes and taxes that you formerly paid to my predecessors, or to myself, over and above the custom of salt,* and crown taxes.+ The thirds of your corn, and of your fruits I do discharge

present likewise, a purple robe, and a you of for ever; together with the polltax upon the inhabitants of Judea, and the three governments of Samaria, Galilee, and Peræa.

"I will, that the city of Jerusalem be accounted holy, and have the privileges of a sanctuary, or city of refuge, with an exemption both to itself and its dependencies from all tenths and tributes. The citadel shall be delivered up to the highpriest, Jonathan, with liberty to put into it, for a garrison, such of his friends and confidants as he shall make choice of.

"It is our further pleasure, that every Jew who was carried away prisoner into any part of our dominions, be forthwith set at liberty, without imposing any hardships, after this decree, so much as upon their cattle, either by press-masters, or That all their sabbaths and otherwise. solemn festivals, and three days before them, shall be days of immunity and freedom to every Jew in our dominion, that they may live quietly, without any sort of molestation. And for so many of the Jews, to the extent of thirty thousand men; as may desire to bear arms in our service, they shall be entertained at the same rate with our guards, and placed also in our garrisons, and about our person, and the better sort of them shall be received as domestics of our royal family. Moreover, they shall have the free exercise of their own laws, both in Jerusalem and in the three dependent provinces: committing it to the high-priest's care to see that no Jew be suffered to worship in any other temple but that of Jerusalem.

"We do hereby grant them likewise the yearly allowance of fifteen thousand shekels of silver toward the charge of their sacrifices out of our own revenues, and discharge the priests and officers attending the service of the temple of the ten thousand drachmas that were formerly paid to our predecessors. It is our farther will, that whosoever shall fly to the temple of Jerusalem, or to the liberties thereof, for any debt, whether to the king or otherwise,

[.] The Eastern people to this day support the expenses of government, in common, by paying a certain proportion of the produce of their lands to their princes. And it appears from this and other passages in scripture, that the custom was in ancient times the same .- Sir J. Chardin, Harmer.

⁺ The Jews were wont to present crowns to the kings of Syria: afterwards that gold, which was paid instead of those crowns, or which was expended in making them, was called the crown gold, and crown tax. The parallel passage in Josephus is, " I forgive you the tax upon salt, and the value of the crowns which you used to offer to me." - Grotius, Whiston.

goods, from any trouble or molestation.

"We likewise give leave, and require that the temple be repaired, strong walls and towers erected, and garrisons put into such places as ye shall think fit to raise and fortify; and all this to be done at our own proper charge."

These were the promises of Demetrius, who wrote to the Jews accordingly.

At this juncture, Alexander raised a powerful army, and advanced at the head of it against the enemy. An engagement ensued, and the left wing of Demetrius pressed the right of Alexander, they pursued their advantage so far that they got much plunder; but the right wing, where the king fought in person, was forced to give way, and a general rout ensued.

Demetrius acquitted himself courageously, and slew many of the enemy, till at last his horse plunging into a bog, he was overpowered by multitudes that pressed upon him, and could have no relief. However, he fought on foot, till his body was covered with darts and arrows. Thus valiantly fell Demetrius, after a reign of eleven years.

CHAPTER IL

Onias obtains permission to build a temple in Egypt .- Contest between the Jews and Samaritans relative to their temple and worship .-Decided in favour of the Jews .- Advocates for the Samaritans, according to agreement, are adjudged to the penalty of death .- Jonathan is highly honoured by Alexander .- His success against his enemies .- Is courteously received by king Ptolemy .- Various fortunes of Ptolemy and Alexander .- Death of those princes .- Jonathan invests Jerusalem .- Obtains the sanction of Demetrius.

ONIAS, the son of Onias the high-priest, who lived in a kind of exile from his own country, with Ptolemy Philometor, at Alexandria, finding Judea so terribly ravaged by the Macedonians, and desirous of acquiring immortal fame, resolved to try

shall be protected, both in his person and | if he could obtain leave from king Ptolemy, and his queen Cleopatra, to build a temple in Egypt, after the model of that of Jerusalem, and to supply it with priests and Levites of his own family.

This design occurred to him from a prediction of the prophet Isaiah, at least six hundred years before; presaging that in time to come there should be a temple erected in Egypt, to the honour of the great God, and that it should be the work of a Jew. Onias was so possessed with this revelation that he wrote a letter to Ptolemy and Cleopatra, to this effect: "When I had the honour to serve your majesties in the field, I passed through several countries, and observed, that in the provinces of Cœlo-syria, Phœnicia, and Leontopolis in the district of Heliopolis, and in several other places, the Jews had no uniformity in their temples, and therefore could not agree among themselves about it; as is the case with the Egyptians, by reason of the multitude of temples, and the diversity of religion.* As

^{*} A nation, so renowned for their knowledge and learning, and who had such certain methods of preserving the traditions of their ancestors, might have kept the original religion, one would think, with more than ordinary purity; at least, would not have run into the same excess of idolatry and polytheism that other people were so strangely addicted to: and yet, if we look a little into their history, we shall soon find more corruption of this kind among them, than in any other nation. Some of their wiser sort indeed, are said to have acknowledged one supreme God, the maker and ruler of the world, whom they sometimes called by the name of Osiris, or Serapis; sometimes by that of Isis; and at other times, by that of Neith, on whose temple at Sais was the following remarkable inscription, 'I am all that has been, is, or shall be, and my vail hath no mortal yet un-covered.' But though some parts of Egypt might at first be free from all idolatrous worship; yet, when the humour began to spread, it soon overran the whole kingdom. The heavenly luminaries were the first objects of profane adoration; and in Egypt, the sun and the moon went under the denomination of Osiris and Isis. After these, the elements, and other parts of nature, such as Vulcan, meaning thereby the fire; Ceres, the earth; Oceanus, the water; and Minerva, the air; were admitted into the number of their deities. But, besides the celestial, they had terrestrial gods likewise; for most of their princes, who had merits well of the people, were, after their death, canonized, and invocated under the names of Sol, Satur-

castle of Bubastes upon the plain, where there are great store of materials for building, and plenty of beasts appointed

I have found out a certain place near the for sacrifice, it is my humble request, that you will permit me to purge and demolish a ruinous temple there, that was never consecrated to any deity, and in the place

nus, Rhea, Jupiter, Juno, Vulcanus, Vesta, and Mercurius, which, according to Diodorus, were the eight first hero-gods which the Egyptians worshipped. Nay, and what is scarce credible, they came at last to give divine honours to several animals, and that with so great a variety, and disagreement among themselves, that, except some of the principal deities, which were honoured all the kingdom over, there was almost in every town or village, a different god, held in veneration in one place and detested in the next, which often occasioned bitter animosities, and sometimes inveterate quarrels, and dangerous wars. Now the reason why the Egyptians adopted such a variety of animals into the number of their gods, was not so much from any consideration of their subserviency to human life, as from a certain similitude they perceived between them and the deity to whom they were devoted. Thus the hawk was made sacred to Osiris, as an emblem of the supreme deity, by reason of its piercing sight and swiftness; the crocodile and sea-horse were sacred to Typho; anubis was said to be the dog-star, and the dog was sacred to him; the serpent or dragon was consecrated to Nephthe, and other suitable animals to their respective gods: nor is the conjecture of Sir John Marsham at all to be rejected, namely, that the use of the hieroglyphical figures of animals might introduce this strange worship, which the Egyptians, in process of time, came to pay them. For as those figures were made choice of, according to the respective properties of each animal, to express the qualities and dignities of the persons they represented, which were generally their gods, princes, and great men; the people became gradually accustomed to these figures, which they used to place in their temples, as the images of their deities; and hence, it is not absurd to imagine, that they came at length to pay a superstitious veneration to the living animals themselves.

But whatever might be the reason or inducements to this kind of idolatry, nothing was so remarkable in the Egyptian religion, as the preposterous worship which that nation paid to animals, such as the ox, the cat, the dog, the hawk, the ibis, the wolf, the crocodile, and several others which they had in high veneration, not when they were alive only, but even after they were dead. Of all these animals, the bull Apis, called Epaphus by the Greeks, was the most famous. Magnificent temples were erected to him; extraordinary honours were paid him while he lived, and still greater after his death. Egypt went then into a general mourning. His obsequies were solemnized with such a pomp as is hardly credible. In the reign of Ptolemy Lagus, the bull Apis dying of old age, the funeral pomp, besides the ordinary expenses, amounted to upwards of fifty thousand French crowns. After the last honours had been paid to the deceased god the next care was to provide him a successor; and all Egypt was sought through for that purpose. He was known by certain signs,

which distinguished him from all other animals of that species; upon his forehead was to be a white spot, in form of a crescent; on his back, the figure of an eagle; upon his tongue that of a beetle. As soon as he was found, mourning gave place to joy; and nothing was heard, in all parts of Egypt, but festivals and rejoicings. The new god was brought to Memphis, to take possession of his dignity, and there installed with a great number of ceremonies. Cambyses, at his return from his unfortunate expedition against Ethiopia, finding all the Egyptians in transports of joy for the discovery of their new god Apis, and imagining that this was intended as an insult upon his misfortunes, killed, in the first impulse of his fury, the young bull, who by that means had but a short enjoyment of his divinity. Whilst they were living, they had lands set apart for the maintenance of each kind, and both men and women were employed in feeding and attending them. The children succeeded their parents in the office, which was so far from being declined, or thought despicable among the Egyptians, that they gloried in it as an high honour; and wearing certain badges, to distinguish them at a distance, were saluted by bending the knee, and other demonstrations of respect. If any person killed any of these sacred animals designedly, he was punished with immediate death: if involuntarily, his punishment was referred to the discretion of the priests; but if the creature slain was a cat, a hawk, or an ibis, whether the thing was done with design or not, the person was to die without mercy, and sometimes without any formal trial or process: Diodorus relates an incident, to which he himself was an eye-witness during his stay in Egypt :- A Roman having inadvertently, and without design, killed a cat, the exasperated populace ran to his house; and neither the authority of the king, who immediately detached a body of his guards, nor the terror of the Roman name, could rescue the unfortunate criminal. And such was the reverence which the Egyptians had for these animals, that in an extreme famine they chose to eat one another, rather than feed upon their imagined deities. The extravagant worship which they paid to some of these animal deities, as to the bull at Memphis; the goat, at Mandes; the lion, at Leontopolis; the crocodile, at the lake Moëris; and to many others, at different placesexceeds all belief. For they were kept in consecrated inclosures, and well attended on by men of high rank, who, at great expense, provided victuals for them, which consisted of the greatest dainties. Nor was this all; for these creatures were washed in hot baths, anointed with most precious ointments, and perfumed with the most odoriferous scents. They lay on the richest carpets, and other costly furniture; and that they might want nothing to make their lives as happy as possible, they had the most beautiful females of their several kinds, to which they gave the name of concubines, provided for them. The crocodile seems to be the

of it to erect another, after the model of that at Jerusalem, with a dedication of it to the most high God, upon condition that prayers be there offered up for the

last animal to which mankind could be tempted to pay divine adoration: but that this might be done with more safety, one of these creatures was trained up to be tame, and familiar for the purpose, and had his ears adorned with strings of jewels and gold, and his forefeet with chains. He was fed with consecrated provisions at the public charge: and when strangers went to see him, (which often happened out of curiosity,) they also carried him a present of a cake, dressed meat, and wine, or a drink made with honey, which was offered to him by the priests; and when he died, his body was embalmed, and buried in a sacred coffin at Arsinoë. We have the following singular story in Maximus Tyrius. An Egyptian woman brought up the young one of a crocodile. The Egyptians esteemed her singularly fortunate, and revered her as the nurse of a deity. The woman had a son about the same age with the crocodile, and they grew up and played together. No harm ensued whilst the crocodile was gentle from being weak; but when it got its strength it devoured the child. woman exulted in the death of her son, and considered his fate as blessed in the extreme, in thus becoming the victim of their domestic god. When any of these animals died, the Egyptians lament-ed them, as if they had been their dearest children, and frequently laid out more than they were worth in their burials. If a cat died in any house, all the family shaved their eye-brows; and if a dog, their whole body: and thus, putting themselves in mourning, they wrapped the dead body up in fine linen, and carried it to be embalmed; where, being anointed with oil of cedar, and other are putterfection. matic preparations to keep it from putrefaction, it was buried with great solemnity in a sacred coffin. The Egyptians, not contented with offering incense to animals, carried their folly to such an excess as to ascribe a divinity to the pulse and roots of their gardens. For this they are ingeniously reproached by the satirist:

Who has not heard where Egypt's realms are named, What monster gods her frantic sons have framed? Here Ibis gorged with well-grown serpents, there The Crocodile commands religious fear. Where Memnon's statue magic strings inspire With vocal sounds, that emulate the lyre; And Thebes, (such, fate, are thy disastrous turns!) Now prostrate o'er her pompous ruins mourns; A monkey-god, prodigious to be told! Strikes the beholder's eye with burnish'd gold. To godship here blue Triton's scaly herd, The river progeny is there preferr'd: Through towns Diana's power neglected lies, Where to her dogs aspiring temples rise: And should you leeks or onions eat, no time Would expiate the sacrilegious crime. Religious nations sure, and blest abodes, Where every orchard is o'er-run with gods.

It is astonishing to see a nation which boasted its superiority above all others with regard to wisdom and learning, thus blindly abandon itself to the

safety and prosperity of your royal persons and family; to the end that all the Jews in your dominions may by this means be united, and better enabled to do your majesties service. This is no more than what the prophet Isaiah had foretold, that God would have a holy place in Egypt."

The piety that the king and his queen Cleopatra expressed upon the receipt of the letter, will appear by their answer, wherein they discharge themselves of having any hand in the impious violation of the law, and cast the whole blame of it

upon Onias in these terms:

"King Ptolemy and queen Cleopatra to Onias, joy and health .- We have read and considered your letter of request, wherein you desire to cleanse and purify an old ruinous temple at Leontopolis near Bubastes upon the plain, within the jurisdiction of Heliopolis, and can hardly conceive how a temple in a place so unclean, and haunted with such varieties of detestable animals, should be in any measure acceptable to God; but as you refer yourself for justification to the predictions of the prophet Isaiah, we do hereby grant unto you full license and permission, provided it be done without giving offence to God in the breach of his laws."

Onias had no sooner obtained this concession, than he applied himself to the

most gross and ridiculous superstitions. Indeed, to read of animals, and vile insects, honoured with religious worship, placed in temples, and maintained with great care and at an extravagant expense; to read that those who murdered them were punished with death, and that these animals were embalmed, and solemnly deposited in tombs assigned them by the public; to hear, that this extravagance was carried to such lengths, as that leeks and onions were acknowleged as deities; were invoked in necessity, and depended upon for succour and protection; are absurdities which we, at this distance of time, can scarce believe; and yet they have the evidence of all antiquity. You enter, says Lucian, into a magnificent temple, every part of which glitters with gold and silver. You there look attentively for a god, and are cheated with a stork, an ape, or a cat; a just emblem, adds that author, of too many palaces, the masters of which are far from being the brightest ornaments of them.—Rollin, Stackhouse, and Herodotus.

raising of the temple and the altar, according to the draught of that at Jerusalem, though it was much short of it both for bulk and magnificence. Having thus accomplished his design, Onias did not want priests and Levites of his own persuasion to assist him in the divine worship, and in the services of the temple.

There happened at Alexandria a violent dispute, between the Jews and the Samaritans that erected the temple at Gerizim in the days of Alexander the Great, concerning that temple and the manner of worshipping, so that Ptolemy was forced upon an appeal to take the matter into his own cognizance, and pass judgment upon the merits of the cause.

The point was this: the Jews insisted that the temple at Jerusalem was the only temple extant that was warranted and authorized by the laws of Moses; the Samaritans stood up for the temple of Gerizim, and both parties by consent referred themselves to the arbitration of the king with his ministers and counsellors, desiring only that counsel might be heard on both sides, and that sentence of death might pass upon the party that should be found guilty.

Sabbeus and Theodosius were for the Samaritans, and Andronicus the son of Messalan, for the Jews; binding themselves by oaths on both sides, in the presence of God and the king, to offer nothing in proof but what was according to the law, and desiring that the breach of that oath might be made death.

The king called his friends and counsellors about him to try the cause. The Jews of Alexandria were greatly concerned lest their advocate might be unequal to the important cause, and much grieved to find the sacred authority of the temple at Jerusalem, the most ancient and noble frame and institution in the whole world, brought into question.

Upon a debate who should speak first, Sabbeus and Theodosius gave the precedence to Andronicus, who opened the case,

and elaborately set forth the sanctity and venerable antiquity of the temple of Jerusalem, even from the very original, according to the law; observing the uninterrupted succession of the priesthood through all ages, with the honour and majesty of the place, as it was celebrated from time to time, with the magnificence and bounty of all the kings of Asia; whereas the temple of Gerizim, then in question, was so obscure in all respects, that little notice was taken of it.

By this speech and other arguments Andronicus persuaded the king to determine that the temple at Jerusalem was built according to the laws of Moses,* and to adjudge Sabbeus and Theodosius to death, according to the conditions of the proposal. This was the state of affairs with the Alexandrian Jews in the days of Ptolemy Philometor.

After the death of Dometrius, Alexander took upon himself the government of Syria; and by a letter to Ptolemy Philometor, sent him a proposal of a match with his daughter, suggesting, that it would

^{*} A very unfair disputation this! while the Jewish disputant, knowing that he could not properly prove out of the Pentateuch, that 'the place which the Lord their God shall choose to place his name there,' so often referred to in the book of Deuteronomy, was Jerusalem any more than Gerizim, that being not determined till the days of David, proves only, what the Samaritans did not deny, that the temple at Jerusalem was much more ancient, and much more celebrated and honoured, than that at Gerizim; which was nothing to the present purpose, the whole evidence, by the very oaths of both parties, being, we see, obliged to be confined to the law of Moses, or to the Pentateuch alone. However, worldly policy and interest, and the multitude prevailing, the court gave sentence, as usual, on the stronger side, and poor Sabbeus and Theodosius, the Samaritan disputants, were martyred, and this, so far as it appears, without any direct hearing at all; which is like the usual practice of such political courts about matters of religion. Our copies say that the body of the Jews were in a great concern about those men (in the plural) who were to dispute for their temple at Jerusalem; whereas it seems here they had but one disputant, Andronicus by name; perhaps more were prepared to speak on the Jews' side; but the first having answered to his name, and overcome the Samaritans, there was no necessity for any other defender of the Jerusalem temple. - Whiston.

after the overthrow of Demetrius, and (through God's favour) the recovery of a kingdom that belonged to him in right of his father, to receive him into his alliance.

Ptolemy was so well pleased with this overture, that he immediately wrote him a letter congratulating him upon all his victories and successes, promising him his daughter in marriage, and appointing Ptolemais for the place of meeting; where he would wait upon him with his daughter Cleopatra, and there consummate the nuptials. Ptolemy went directly to the place with his daughter, where he found Alexander, and celebrated the marriage, with such a treasure of gold and silver for her portion as became the magnificence of so great a prince. Jonathan the high-priest was invited by Alexander to the nuptials, where both the kings welcomed him with honours and presents on both sides; Alexander appointed him to change his habit, put on a purple robe, and take his place next to himself upon the throne, commanding also the chief officers to attend him into the heart of the city, and make proclamation that no man should presume, upon his peril, either to calumniate, accuse, or otherwise give him the least molestation.

Such were the kindness and respect that Alexander had for Jonathan, that he reckoned him among the choicest of his friends, and treated him with every token of esteem.

At this time Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius, embarked with a body of mercenaries, and passed with them out of Crete into Cilicia. Alexander, alarmed at the news of this expedition, hastened from Phœnicia to Antioch, to put affairs into a posture of defence before Demetrius could get thither; committing the government of Cœlo-syria, in the mean time, to the care of Apollonius,* who marched

neither be dishonourable nor unreasonable | with an army to Jamnia, and thence sent Jonathan the high-priest an expostulatory message, demanding "what privilege he had to live at ease and liberty, and to withdraw himself from the service of the public? The scandal," said he, "is laid at my door for suffering this affront, without reducing you to subjection. If you are as brave as you would be thought to be, come down from your hiding-places in the mountains, and meet me like a man upon the plain, sword in hand, and cast the issue of the cause upon that trial. I am now at the head of a body of the choicest men in the empire, and men that in feats of arms have ever had the ascendant of your ancestors; wherefore, I dare

> ro-Macedonians and Greeks; and in the history of the Maccabees, we find so many mentioned of that name, that, for the prevention of mistakes, it may not be improper to give some account of the several persons who bore it. The first that we meet with of that name, is. Apollonius the son of Thraseas, 2 Maccab. iii. 5. who was governor of Cœlo-syria and Phœnicia under Seleucus Philopater, when Heliodorus came to Jerusalem to rob the temple. He was chief minister of state to Seleucus; but on the accession of his brother Antiochus Epiphanes to the crown, he left Syria and retired to Miletus. He had a son of his own name, that was bred up at Rome, and resided with Demetrius, (the son of Seleucus Philopater,) who was then an hostage in that place. When Demetrius recovered the crown of Syria, this Apollonius hecame his prime favourite, and was made governor of Cœlo-syria and Phœnicia, the same government which his father held under Seleucus Philopater; and this I take to be the same Apollonius, who being continued in the same government by Alexander, now revolted from him, to embrace the interest of Demetrius the son of his old master, and to engage Jonathan to do the like, marched his forces against him. Another Apollonius is spoken of, 2 Maccab. iv. 21. as the chief minister of Antiochus Epiphanes, who from him was sent as ambassador, first to Rome, and afterwards to Ptolemy Philopater, king of Egypt; and him I take to be the same, that, with a detachment of two and twenty thousand men, was sent to destroy Jerusalem, and build a fortress on mount Acra. There are, besides these, two other persons, in the history of the Maccabees mentioned under the name Apollonius. The former of these being governor of Samaria, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, I Maccab, iii. 10. was slain in battle by Judas Maccabeus; and the latter (who is called the the son of Genneus, 2 Maccab. xii. 2.) being governor of some toparchy in Palestine, under Antiochus Eupator, did then signalize himself by being a great enemy of the Jews .- Prideaux's Con-

^{*} Apollonius was a common name among the Sy-

some indifferent place, where swords, not stones, shall decide the controversy, and leave the vanguished party no possibility

of saving themselves by flight."

Jonathan was so incensed with the insolent challenge, that he marched out of Jerusalem with ten thousand chosen men, and his brother Simon with him; and coming up to Joppa, encamped there. Apollonius having a garrison in the town, they shut their gates against him, so that he put himself in a posture for an assault: whereupon the inhabitants, through fear of a storm, delivered up the place.

When Apollonius understood that his antagonist was possessed of Joppa, he betook himself with three thousand horse and eight thousand foot, to Azotus, and from thence, by easy marches, to Joppa; where he drew off a little to engage Jo-· nathan in the open plain, depending upon

his superiority of numbers.

Jonathan advanced; who, when he found the enemy in a plain field, gave them battle. Apollonius had planted a thousand horse in an ambush near a brook, to fall upon the enemy's rear, which Jonathan was aware of, and without any difficulty prevented; for he drew up his men in a square that fronted every side, so that they were ready on all hands to receive the charge.

The engagement continued till evening, when Jonathan ordered his brother Simon, with part of his army, to charge the enemy's main body, having commanded his own men only to receive the darts and arrows of the horse upon their bucklers,

without any other resistance.

They kept themselves upon their guard till the enemy had expended all their offensive weapons, without doing any execution; for they stood so thick, that their darts fell upon their bucklers, which they The enemy was so could not pierce. spent with this manner of fighting from morning till the afternoon, that Simon took that opportunity of attacking their

you once again to give me a meeting in main body; and was so bravely seconded by his soldiers, that he broke them and put them to flight.

> The horse, upon this attack, fled in the greatest confusion. Jonathan closely pursued them as far as Azotus, killed great numbers, and forced the rest into the temple of Dagon for sanctuary. He also took the city, set fire to it, and several neighbouring villages, and burnt them all to the ground, together with the temple of Dagon, and all the people that fled to it for protection. The number of those that were burnt or fell by the sword, was computed to amount to eight thousand men.

After the defeat of this army, Jonathan advanced with his troops to Askalon, and pitched his tent before the city, the inhabitants coming out to him, and treating him with many presents and tokens of

respect.

After this he returned to Jerusalem victorious, and laden with spoil. In consequence of this victory, Alexander affected an extraordinary approbation of the conduct of Jonathan; and, as a mark of his esteem, presented him with a golden buckle,* an honour peculiar only to the royal family; and conferred on him the government of Ekron.

At the same time, Ptolemy Philometor, with both land and sea-forces, came into Syria, to the assistance of his son-in-law, Alexander, where he was received with great honour, according to the king's order, in Azotus.

In this place he was accosted with complaints of the burning of Dagon's temple, every one exclaiming against Jonathan, as the author of that outrage, beside the havoc he had made in the country by fire and sword. Ptolemy heard these complaints without returning any answer. Jonathan

^{*} The golden buckle (which was worn upon the shoulder) was a very singular mark of distinction both among the Greeks and Persians, from whom the Macedonians took it, and was generally made the reward of great and gallant actions in war.-Calmet's Commentary.

met him at Joppa, and was received with magnificence and honour; and after conducting the king to the river Eleutherus,*

returned to Jerusalem.

When Ptolemy arrived in the city of Ptolemais, a plot was laid against his life, by the treachery of Alexander, and conducted by his friend Ammonius. This device being discovered, he wrote to Alexander, to demand justice. But Alexander refusing to deliver Ammonius up, convinced him that he himself had been concerned in it. From his attachment to this infamous person, he now incurred the hatred of Ptolemy, as he had before done of the people of Antioch. But the traitor soon after met with a deserved fate.

Philometor, incensed at the perfidy and ingratitude of Alexander, determined to disclaim all relationship to him; and therefore took away his daughter from her husband, and entered into a league with Demetrius against Alexander, on condition of giving him Cleopatra in marriage, and putting him in possession of his father's kingdom.

Demetrius was well pleased both with the alliance and the woman. But the people of Antioch had such an aversion to Demetrius on his father's account, that Ptolemy had a hard task to persuade them to receive him for their king, whom they looked upon as their enemy. Yet such was their hatred to Alexander upon the score of Ammonius, that they were prevailed upon to free the city of Ammonius; who thereupon escaped into Cilicia from Antioch.

Ptolemy upon this made his entrance into Antioch, where he was saluted, proclaimed, and crowned king, both by the citizens and the soldiery, that is, in the right of Asia and of Egypt.

As he was a person of a just, temperate, and discreet disposition, he managed his affairs to the entire satisfaction of his own people; and likewise without giving any cause of jealousy or envy to the Romans.

After his proclamation, he called a general council of the Antiochians, and endeavoured to attach them to Demetrius as their king, assuring them that the sense of the present obligation would utterly extinguish the remembrance of past misunderstandings; and undertaking himself to take care, that in the administration of the government he should not so much as offer to commit an action unworthy of the dignity and trust reposed in him.

Upon this representation and assurance, the whole body of the people were prevailed upon to take Demetrius for their

king.

Alexander was at this time ravaging Syria, and the country about Antioch, with fire and sword, at the head of a numerous and powerful army that he brought out of Cilicia, when Ptolemy, with his son-in-law Demetrius (the nuptials being celebrated) encountered and routed him, forcing him to fly to Arabia.

It happened in that battle that Ptolemy's horse taking fright at the braying of an elephant, threw his rider, and gave his enemies the advantage of giving him many wounds upon the head, which misfortune would certainly have cost him his life upon the spot, if he had not been rescued by a party of his guards. But such was his condition, that he lay speechless for four days, not understanding what was said to him. Upon the fifth day, when he was recovering a little, one Zabelus, an Arabian prince, having cut off Alexander's head, sent it to Ptolemy, who was greatly pleased both with the action and the spectacle. But he had not long indulged his eye with this sight, before he was summoned to pay that debt from which no mortal is exempt.

Demetrius succeeded Alexander; he was a man of a rough, rugged temper, without regard to the obligations and services he had received from them, upon

^{*} Near the city Orthosia, at the foot of mount Lebanon, falling into the Mediterranean not far from Aradus in Syria. Its modern name is Velania.—Drusius.

the credit of an affinity with Cleopatra. This conduct so disgusted the soldiers, that they deserted his cause, and hastened to Alexandria, leaving only the elephants behind them. the dutiful and affectionate return we have from time to time received from our friends the Jews, in an acknowledgment of the good-will we bear them, that it is our good pleasure to give them some signal mark

Jonathan, the high-priest, having drawn together all the force he was able to raise in Judea, invested the citadel of Jerusalem, with a resolution to dislodge the Macedonian garrison, and the fugitive Jews that had taken sanctuary there.

Confident of the strength of the place, they bade him defiance; but were soon compelled to send privately to Demetrius for succour. This intelligence so incensed him, that he immediately marched out with his army from Antioch toward Jonathan; and upon his arrival at Ptolemais, sent for him by letter to come to him.

Jonathan, upon this invitation, took with him several rich presents; and, attended by the priests and elders, laid them before Demetrius.

This expedient so mollified the king, that he received the presents with the utmost complacency, and, in token of the obligation conferred on him by Jonathan, he confirmed the pontificate with which he had been vested by his predecessors, and was so far from giving credit to the calumny and suggestions of the fugitive Jews against their countrymen, that upon Jonathan's request, he made an abatement of the tribute of Judea, together with the dependencies of Samaria, Joppa, and Galilee, to the amount of three hundred talents.* Hereupon he caused the following declaration to be made in their favour:

"King Demetrics to his brother Jonathan, and to the whole Jewish nation, joy and greeting.—This is to inform you, that we have here sent you the copy of a letter lately written to Lasthenes, our trusty and well-beloved cousin."

"King Demetrius to his father Lasthenes, greeting.—We are so sensible of from time to time received from our friends the Jews, in an acknowledgment of the good-will we bear them, that it is our good pleasure to give them some signal mark of the esteem we have for them. Wherefore, we do by these presents assign the three prefectures of Apherema, Lydda, and Ramatha, that were taken from the Samaritans, together with all the land thereunto belonging, to the use and advantage of Judea, discharging likewise the priests at Jerusalem of all the duties by them formerly allowed to our forefathers, as well upon corn and fruits as upon saltpits and crown-taxes, with an express caution and prohibition that nothing of this be expected from them for the future. Be sure to send the copy of this letter to Jonathan, and have it hung up in the most conspicuous place of the holy temple."

Affairs were now settled in so amicable a manner, that Demetrius, flattering himself into an opinion that there was no longer any danger, discharged his army without their full pay, retaining only a body of mercenaries that he had raised in Crete,† and other of the neighbouring

^{*} Three hundred Syrian talents were in value worth twelve thousand eight hundred and thirty two pounds, seven pence halfpenny of our money.

⁺ This island in the Mediterranean, now called Candia, is situated 81 miles from the southern extremity of the Morea, 92 from Rhodes, and 230 from the African coast. A high chain of mountains, covered with forests, runs through the whole length of the island, in two ranges. It was renowned in ancient times for the fertility of its soil, the number of its inhabitants, and the wisdom of its laws. At an early period, this island had made great advances in civilization; and while the other states of Greece were immersed in ignorance and barbarism, Crete possessed a free and regular government, with a system of laws which has been the admiration of succeeding ages. Most of the absurdities that have been embodied into the heathen mythology had their origin here; and Crete may be justly said to have been the cradle of the gods. Such of their princes as were distinguished for their wisdom, their valour, or their beneficence, were, after their deaths, raised to the rank of deities; and the high esteem in which the Cretians were held among the other inhabitants of Greece soon gained them admission into the worship of their more barbarous neighbours. In fact, there is scarcely a divinity in the whole system of Grecian theology that did not receive his title and his honours in that island. But the glory of Crete was Minos the legislator, who is the first.

islands; so that dismissing his father's old croops without any pay, contrary to the practice of his ancestors, who paid them in peace as well as in war, and kept them in readiness to serve upon any occasion, he, by that means, lost the affection of his people.

CHAPTER III.

Jonathan besiegeth the tower of Jerusalem, and assists Demetrius with a supply of troops .-Affords him succour upon an important occasion, but receives an ungrateful return .- Demetrius routed by Jonathan in alliance with Antiochus and Tryphon.-Jonathan surprised by an ambush.-Matthias and Judas make a valiant defence.-Jonathan sends an embassy to Rome and Lacedæmon, and obtains a league with those nations .- The Jewish sects .- Jonathan and Simon undertake to fortify Jerusalem .- Demetrius routed and taken prisoner.

This defection of the army from Demetrius was so notorious, that Diodotus,

it is said, who reduced a wild people to regularity of life; and in order to effect this the more completely, he retired during nine years into the cavern of Jupiter; which seems to be the same as what is related by the Hindoo Puranas, that Sami Rama performed austere devotion nine years in the hollow of a tree before she effected her settlement. Though the isle of Crete was only 250 miles in length, and 50 in breadth, containing a circumference of about 600 miles, yet such was its fertility and population, that it is said to have contained ninety or an hundred cities. According to some ancient authors it was originally peopled from Palestine; but historians are not agreed as to who were the aborigines of the island. Homer, in the Odyssey, enumerates four distinct nations inhabiting Crete, besides the natives, all using different dialects, and all apparently free:

There is a land amid the sable flood Called Crete; fair, fruitful, circled by the sea, Numerous are her inhabitants, a race Not to be summed, and ninety towns she boasts. Diverse their language is; Achaians some, And some indigenous are; Cydonians there, Crest-shaking Dorians, and Pelasgians dwell.

"They were extremely covetous, says Dr Macknight, "and notorious liars; insomuch that to speak like a Cretian, became a proverb for deceiving and telling lies; and a Cretian-lie, signified one that was remarkable for its magnitude and impudence. The apostle Paul quotes Epimenides, one of their own poets, as accusing them, not merely of falsehood, but of gluttony and idleness, and he declares that those vices constituted their true character. Polybius, too, assures us, that the Cretians were the only people in the world who

otherwise called Tryphon, a native of Apamea,* and formerly an officer under Alexander, availing himself of the accusation, applied to Malchus, an Arabian, who was at that time governor of young Antiochus, the son of Alexander, informing him how desperately the soldiers were bent against Demetrius, and proposing, if Malchus would put Antiochus into his hands, to restore him to his father's throne, Malchus was at first diffident of the execution of his promise; but by the force of entreaty he was in a short time brought to a compliance.

During these transactions Jonathan the high-priest laid close siege to the citadel at Jerusalem, with a resolution to clear, not only that castle, but other strongholds, where the fugitive Jews sheltered themselves; insomuch that he sent an embassy to Demetrius with presents desiring him to withdraw all his men that were in any of the fortresses of Judea: Demetrius assured him that he was ready to gratify him, not only in that, but in a greater matter, as soon as he could despatch the present war, which so employed him at that time, that he was not at liberty to attend to any thing else: but abjured Jonathan by all that was sacred in friendship, to send him a supply of men, as his own troops were gone over to the enemy. Jonathan soon after this sent the king a reinforcement of three thousand choice

The people of Antioch were so enraged against Demetrius, both for his father's sake and his own, that they desired nothing more than an opportunity for revenge; wherefore, upon the news of this relief from Jonathan, and reconsideration

found nothing sordid in money, whatever was the way in which it was acquired; and represents them as disgraced by piracy, robbery, and almost every other crime.—Jones.

* It is a city of Syria, lying upon the Orontes, and was built, as is believed, either by Seleucus, the first king of Syria, or by his son Antiochus

Soter, in honour of queen Apamea, the wife of Seleucus, the mother of Antiochus,

of the hazard of his growing stronger and stronger, if they were not before hand with him, they betook themselves to their arms, and immediately beset the palace, as if they were ready to give the assault. But their chief business was rather to secure the avenues, and seize the king as he was coming out.

Demetrius finding himself thus beset, drew up his foreign mercenaries, together with Jonathan's auxiliaries, and charged the enemy, but met with a smart repulse, and was obliged to retreat. The Jews, upon this, retired into the palace, where they mounted the battlements; and from thence with darts and arrows so galled the enemy, that they forced them from one house to another, without sustaining much loss to themselves.

The next thing they did was to fire the city, which, being for the greater part built of wood, and the houses standing close, was easily effected. The inhabitants finding that the fire could not be extinguished, shifted for themselves; the Jews still pursuing them as before, and doing great execution.

This rout put an end to their fighting; and all that now remained was to save their wives and children. But the Jews took advantage of their confusion, and falling upon them, according to the king's order, killed great numbers of them in the pursuit, and forced the rest to lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion.

This victory put an end to the war; the rebellion being pardoned, the booty was given to the Jews, whom Demetrius sent back to Jonathan, with a most honourable testimony of their valour, acknowledging that it was to their courage he stood indebted for that success. spirit of gratitude did not possess him long; for he afterward not only broke his promise, but threatened him with a war, if he should not, for the future, make good those tributes to himself, which the Jews had formerly paid to his predecessors.

cution, if Tryphon had not diverted him, by forcing him to make use of that army against himself, which he had designed against Jonathan, who being now neturned out of Arabia into Syria, with young Antiochus, set the crown upon his head, and by the help of the soldiers, who had been defrauded of their pay, made open war upon Demetrius, defeated him in a pitched battle, made himself master of his elephants, and of the city of Antioch, and forced him back into Cilicia.

Antiochus, upon this resolution, sent an embassy to Jonathan, and acknowledged him his friend and ally, established him in the pontificate, put him in the possession of the four governments that were assigned to Judea, and gave his brother Simon the command of all his forces from Tyre to the borders of Sidon; presenting Jonathan, over and above, with several cups of gold, purple garments, with a golden buckle, and the privilege of using and wearing these ensigns of state, and adopting him also into the roll of his choicest friends.

Jonathan was so sensible of the multiplied bounties and marks of honour he had received from Antiochus, that he forthwith despatched an express to Antiochus and Tryphon, with a most affectionate tender of his friendship and service, with his readiness to join against Demetrius as a common enemy; reflecting upon him also, as the most ungrateful of men, in returning so much evil for all the service he had done him.

No sooner had Jonathan the commission for raising men than he began to raise levies in Syria and Phœnicia, and from thence proceeded to all the neighbouring towns and cities, where he was received with great honour, but raised no recruits.

Upon his coming afterwards to Askalon, the people kindly entertained him; he took occasion to lay before them (as he did at other places in Cœlo-syria) how much it was their interest and duty to take up He would have put his threats into exe- arms against Demetrius in behalf of AnTHE BIBLE.

tiochus, having so fair an opportunity to be revenged of him for the injuries he had done them.

He wrought upon them so effectually by his advice, that they promised supplies. But advancing afterward to Gaza upon the same good office to Antiochus, he found, to his great astonishment, the gates shut against him, and the people obstinately resolved to abide by Demetrius.

Jonathan, incensed at this indignity, divided his army, and assaulting the town with one part, with the other went up and down to burn and lay waste the country.

The inhabitants of Gaza, after a short time, seeing nothing but inevitable destruction before their eyes, no appearance of any relief from Demetrius, nor so much as the hope of any at so remote a distance, upon second thought judged it most advisable to make a seasonable and submissive application to Jonathan by their deputies, who were as frankly received on the other hand into his interest and friendship.

Jonathan, in fine, accepted of their proposals and hostages, and sent them away to Jerusalem, passing himself through the country to Damaseus.

Demetrius in the mean while had a strong army encamped before Cades, upon the borders of Tyre and Galilee, with a design to draw Jonathan out of Syria by way of diversion, to the assistance of Galilee, on a presumption that he would attend to the interest of his own country in preference to all others; but this did not hinder Jonathan from advancing with all speed to encounter him, leaving his brother Simon in his absence to take care of Judea.

Simon at the same time, with what men he could get together out of that country, marched up to Bethsura, and assaulted it, though accounted the strongest and most defensible place in all Judea, and in the hands of the faction of Demetrius. When the garrison found themselves so pressed with works and engines, that the place seemed to be in some danger, they sent a messenger to Simon, for leave to quit the place, and without any molestation or violence, to march away to Demetrius.

They were brought to these terms by the apprehension of being all put to the sword if the place was taken by force. Simon granted them their own conditions, and put another garrison in the place of what was there before.

Jonathan at this time departing from the place, where he had first encamped, advanced in the plain of Asor, not in the least suspecting any enemy upon that quarter; but a party of Demetrius, having intelligence of his design the day before, placed an ambush under a mountain, and marched toward him with their body in the open plain.

As soon as Jonathan saw them in order of battle, and ready to charge, he gave his men the best orders he could in so short a time, how to govern themselves in the action; but when the Jews came to discover the ambush, they turned their backs immediately, for fear of being pent up betwixt the two bodies, and cut off.

The terror was so general, that Jonathan had hardly a man to stand by him, saving only two captains of his guards, Mattathias the son of Absalom, and Judas the son of Calphi, who, with a band of fifty brave men, stood their ground, and made so desperate a charge on the enemy's front, that Jonathan's deserters finding the soldiers of Demetrius in confusion, and almost ready to run, rallied, and falling upon them afresh, killed two thousand upon the spot, put to flight the rest, and pursued them to Cades, up to their very tents.

Jonathan, after this glorious victory, returned to Jerusalem; and in this height of success sent ambassadors to Rome, with a commission to renew an alliance with them, and with orders to go to Lacedæmon in their return, upon the same account. His proposals were accepted, and his ambassadors honourably

treated, and despatched with letters recommendatory to the kings of Europe and Asia for their safe passage. They called likewise upon the Lacedæmonians, in their way back again, and presented them with letters, as follow:

"Jonathan, the high-priest, and the elders of the nation, the priests, and other people of the Jews, unto the ephori, * the senate, and the people of the Lacedæmonians, their brethren, send greeting. -Whereas we find in a letter of a remote date from Areus your king to Onias our high-priest, (a copy whereof we send you here inclosed,) importing a near affinity of blood betwixt us: and whereas it appeareth also by the testimony we then rendered to Areus himself, with what joy we received the intimation of such an alliance in that letter; this gives you to understand, that we should have put in our claim to the honour of your friendship before, but that we were not willing to prevent you in the glory of leading the example. Be pleased to take notice, however, that from the first ratification of an amity betwixt us to this day, we have never forgotten you in our prayers to God for your prosperity, health, and victory over all your enemies; and we have been as tender likewise in all our sufferings and distresses, under the persecution of our covetous and ambitious neighbours, not to involve, either

yourselves, or any other of our friendly allies, in our trouble; but our circumstances being now easier, and our wars, by God's providence, over, we have sent Numenius, the son of Antiochus, and Antipater, the son of Jason, being senators and men of honour, to the Romans, and with letters also to yourselves for the strengthening and renewing of a friendly understanding betwixt us. Be pleased to return us what answer you shall think meet, and let us understand wherein we may be useful to you; in a full trust and confidence, that you shall find us ever ready to serve you in all offices of affection and respect."

The Lacedæmonians not only gave the Jewish ambassadors an honourable reception, but a memorial, which was formed and confirmed by public authority, testifying the friendship and alliance between the two states.

The Jews were divided at this time into three sects, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.†

^{*} The ephori were powerful magistrates at Sparta, who were first created by Lycurgus; or, according to some, by Theopompus, B. c. 760; they were five in number. Like censors in the state, they could check and restrain the authority of the kings, and even imprison them, if guilty of irregularities. They fined Archidamus for marrying a wife of small stature, and imprisoned Agis for his unconstitutional behaviour. They were much the same as the tribunes of the people at Rome, created to watch with a jealous eye over the liberties and rights of the populace. They had the management of the public money, and were the arbiters of peace and war. Their office was annual, and they had the privilege of convening, proroguing, and dissolving the greater and less assemblies of the people. The former was composed of 9000 Spartans, all inhabitants of the city; the latter of 30,000 Lacedæmonians, inhabitants of the inferior towns and villages.—Lempriere.

⁺ The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, the three most distinguished and powerful of the Jewish sects, were cordially united in sentiment as to all those fundamental points which constituted the basis and chief support of the Jewish religion. All of them, for instance, rejected with detestation the idea of a plurality of gods, and would acknowledge the existence of but one almighty Power, whom they regarded as the Creator of the universe, and believed to be endowed with the most absolute perfection and goodness. were equally agreed in the opinion, that God had selected the Hebrews from amongst the other nations of the earth as his peculiar people, and had bound them to himself by an unchangeable and everlasting covenant. With the same unanimity they maintained that Moses was the ambassador of heaven, and consequently that the law promulgated by him was of divine original. It was also their general belief, that in the books of the Old Testament were to be found the means of obtaining salvation and happiness: and that whatever principles or duties were therein laid down or inculcated, were to be received with reverence, and implicitly conformed to. But an almost irreconcileable difference of opinion, and the most vehement disputes, prevailed among them respecting the original source or fountain from whence all religion was to be deduced. In addition to the written law, the Pharisees had recourse to another, which had been received merely through oral tradition. This latter both the Sadducees and the Essenes

The Pharisees held, that men were subjected to a fatality, in some cases, and left at liberty in others, to act as they pleased.

rejected with contempt, as altogether spurious. The interpretation of the law yielded still further ground for acrimonious contention. The Pharisees maintained that the law, as committed to writing by Moses, and likewise every other part of the sacred volume, had a twofold sense or meaning; the one plain and obvious to every reader, the other abstruse and mystical. The Sadducees, on the contrary, would admit of nothing beyond a simple interpretation of the words, according to their strict literal sense. The Essenes, or at least the greater part of them, differing from both of these, considered the words of the law to possess no force or power whatever in themselves, but merely to exhibit the shadows or images of celestial objects, of virtues, and of duties. So much dissension and discord respecting the rule of religion, and the sense in which the divine law ought to be understood, could not fail to produce a great diversity in the forms of religious worship, and naturally tended to generate the most opposite and conflicting sentiments on subjects of a divine na-

The PHARISEES, in point of numbers, riches, and power, far surpassed every other Jewish sect; and since they constantly exhibited a great display of religion, in an apparent zeal for the cultivation of piety and brotherly love, and by an affectation of superior sanctity in their opinions, their manners, and even in their dress, the influence which they possessed over the minds of the people was unbounded; insomuch that they may almost be said to have given what direction they pleased to public affairs. It is unquestionable, however, that the religion of the Pharisees was, for the most part, founded in consummate hypocrisy; and that at the bottom they were generally the slaves of every vicious appetite; proud, arrogant, and avaricious, consulting only the gratification of their lusts, even at the moment of their professing themselves to be engaged in the service of their Maker. odious features in the character of the Pharisees caused them to be rebuked by our Saviour with the utmost severity of reprehension; with more severity, indeed, than he bestowed even on the Sadducees, who, although they had departed widely from the genuine principles of religion, yet did not impose on mankind by a pretended sanctity, or devote themselves with insatiable greediness to the acquisition of honours and riches. The Pharisees considered the soul to be immortal. They also believed in the resurrection of the body, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. They admitted the free agency of man to a certain extent; but beyond this, they supposed his actions to be controlled by the decrees of fate. These points of doctrine, however, seem not to have been understood or explained by all of this sect in the same way: neither does it appear that any great pains were taken to define and ascertain them with precision and accuracy, or to support them by reasoning and argument. The Pharisees are thus

The Sadducees did not allow of any fatality; but that every man had it in his own power to make his condition better or worse, according as he pursued right or wrong measures.

described by Brucker, in his Critical History of Philosophy: The most celebrated Jewish sect was that of the Pharisees. Its origin, as well as that of the other sects, is involved in some obscurity. The prophet Isaiah, indeed, found among the Jews, in his time, several appearances of the spirit and character which afterwards distinguished the sect of the Pharisees. But we have no proof that they existed as a distinct body in the prophetic age; nor do we find any traces of this sect prior to the time when oral traditions, together with the allegorical interpretations of the written law, were introduced in the manner already explained. Although we meet with no satisfactory evidence of the existence of the sect of the Hasidæi, which Scaliger supposes to have been the foundation of the Pharisaic sect, we think there can be little reason to doubt that this sect arose soon after the return from the Babylonish captivity, in consequence of the introduction of traditionary institutions and allegorical interpretations. That it was established, and had acquired great authority, in the time of Hyrcanus, and of his sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, has been already hinted, and may be seen more at large in Josephus's account of their affairs. Josephus, who was himself of this sect, speaks of it as flourishing in the time of Jonathan the high-priest, together with those of the Sadducees and Essenes; which invalidates the conjecture of Basnage, that the Pharisaic sect owed its rise to the separation which took place between the schools of Hillel and Shammai; for the Jewish writers agree, that these celebrated doctors did not flourish earlier than an hundred years before the Christian era. Although the exact time of the first appearance of the Pharisaic sect cannot be ascertained, its origin may be easily traced back to the same period in which the Sadducean heresy arose. From the time that the notion of supernumerary acts of self-denial, devotions, and charity, was introduced under the sanction of the traditionary law, a wide door was opened for superstition, religious pride, and hypocrisy. Whilst, on the one hand, some would despise the weakness, or the affectation, of professing to be pious and holy beyond the prescription of the written law, others, through a fanatical spirit, or that they might provide themselves with a convenient cloak for their vices, would become scrupulous observers of the traditionary institutions. And when these pretenders to extraordinary sanctity saw that many of those who observed only the written law, not only disclaimed all works of supererogation, but even renounced the hope of future rewards, they would think it necessary to separate themselves into a distinct body, that they might the more successfully display their sanctity and piety. These conjectures are confirmed by the name of the sect, which is derived from a word which signifies to separate. Their separation consisted chiefly in certain distinctions respecting food, clothing, and reThe Essenes, on the other hand, acknowledged no other power than that of an overruling destiny, working according to the predetermination of an irresistible fate.

ligious ceremonies: it does not seem to have in-terrupted the uniformity of religious worship, in which the Jews of every sect appear to have always united. The peculian character and spirit of Pharisaism consisted in the strict observance of the oral law, which they believed to have been delivered to Moses by an archangel, during his forty days residence on Mount Sinai, and to have been by him committed to seventy elders, who trans-mitted it to posterity. Their superstitious rever-ence for this law, and the apparent sanctity of manners which it produced, rendered them exceedingly popular. The multitude, for the most part, espoused their interest; and the great, who feared their artifice, were frequently obliged to court their favour. Hence they obtained the high-est offices both in the state and the priesthood, and had great weight both in public and private affairs: in some instances they proved so troublesome to the reigning powers as to subject themselves to severe penalties. Hyrcanus and Alexander restrained their increasing influence, and treated them with great rigour. Under Alexandra, however, they regained their consequence; the dissensions between the schools of Hillel and Shammai a little before the Christian era, increased their number and power; and they continued, till the destruction of Jerusalem, to enjoy the chief sway in the sanhedrim and in the synagogue. After that period, when the other sects were dispersed, the Pharisees retained their authority; and, though the name has been dropped, their tenets and customs have ever since prevailed among the Jewish Rabbinites; so that at this day, except the Karæites, scarcely any Jews are to be found who are not, in reality, of the Pharisaic sect. The principal dogmas of the Pharisees were these: the oral law, delivered from God to Moses on Mount Sinai, by the angel Metraton, and transmitted to posterity by tradition, is of equal authority with the written law. By observing both these laws, a man may not only obtain justification with God, but perform meritorious works of supererogation. Fastings, almsgiving, ablutions, confessions, are sufficient atonements for sin. Thoughts and desires are not sinful, unless they are carried into action. God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and governs all things, even the actions of men, by his providence. Man can do nothing without divine influence; which does not, however, destroy the freedom of the human will. The soul of man is spiritual and immortal. In the invisible world beneath the earth, rewards and punishments will be dispensed to the virtuous and vicious. The wicked shall be confined in an eternal prison; but the good shall obtain an easy return to life. Besides the soul of man, there are other spirits, or angels, both good and bad. The resurrection of the body is to be expected. It appears from many passages in the writings of the Jewish rabbies, that trey held the doctrine of the migration of souls from one body |

The officers of Demetrius were now advanced toward Jonathan, at the head of a numerous army, in hopes of retrieving the reputation he had lost by their late overthrow. But Jonathan having intelli-

to another: and it is probable that they derived it from the ancient Pharisees, and these from the Oriental philosophers. This metempsychosis is, however, to be understood in the Pythagoric and not in the Stoic sense. The Jews, probably, borrowed this error from the Egyptians.-There is no reason, as some writers have done, to consider the sect of the Pharisees as a branch from the Stoic school. For, though the Pharisees resembled the Stoics in their affectation of peculiar sanctity, their notion of Divine providence was essentially different from the Stoical doctrine of fate: and their cast of manners arose from a different source; that of the Stoics being derived from their idea of the nature of the soul, as a particle of the divine nature; that of the Pharisees, from a false persuasion that the law might be fulfilled, and justification with God obtained, by ceremonial observances. The peculiar manners of this sect are strongly marked in the writings of the evangelists; Matt. ch. vi, ix, xv, xxiii. Luke ch. vii. &c.; particularly, their exactness in observing the rites and ceremonies of the law, both written and traditionary; the rigour of their discipline, in watchings, fastings, and ablutions; their scrupulous care to avoid every kind of ritual impurity; their long and frequent prayers, made not only in the synagogues and temple, but in the public streets; their phylacteries on the borders of their garments, in which were written sentences of the law; their assiduity in making proselytes; their ostentatious charities; and; under all this show of zeal and piety, their vanity, avarice, licentiousness, and inhumanity. This account is confirmed by the testimony of the Jewish writers themselves. The Talmudic books mention several distinct classes of Pharisees, under characters which show them to have been deeply immersed in the idlest and most ridiculous superstitions. Among these were the Truncated Pharisee, who, that he might appear in profound meditation, as if destitute of feet, scarcely lifted them from the ground; the Mortar Pharisee, who, that his contemplations might not be disturbed, wore a deep cap, in the shape of a mortar, which could only permit him to look upon the ground at his feet; and the Striking Pharisee, who, shutting his eyes as he walked, to avoid the sight of women, often struck his head against the wall. Such wretched expedients did some of these hypocrites make use of to captivate the admiration of the vul-The political influence which their popularity gave them appears in almost every part of the Jewish history; particularly in the reigns of Hyrcanus, Aristobulus, Alexander Jannæus, Alexandra, and Herod.—Mosheim, Brucker.

The Sadducees were a noted sect among the Jews, in the days of our Lord, and of whom we have, consequently, frequent mention in the writings of the evangelists. According to Dr Mosheim, the Sadducees fell greatly short of the Pharisees in number as well as influence; but this is easily

ed to meet them at Hamath, with a resolution to oppose their passage into Judea,

encamping himself within fifty furlongs of accounted for, from the manners and principles of the sect. Their leading tenet was, that all our hopes and fears terminate with the present life: the soul being involved in one common fate with the body, and like it, liable to perish and be dissi-pated. Upon this principle, it was very natural for them to maintain, that obedience to the law would be rewarded by God with length of days, and an accession of the good things of this life, such as hopours and wealth; whilst the violators of it would, in like manner, find their punishment in the temporary sufferings and afflictions of the present life. This led them to regard none as the present life. This led them to regard none as the favourites or friends of heaven, but the fortunate and the happy: for the poor and the miserable they entertained no sentiments of compassion; their hopes and their desires all centered in a life of ease and voluptuous gratification, as Josephus informs us. With a view, in some degree to justify this system, and cast as it were a veil over its deformity, they denied that man had any natural propensity to either good or evil; but insisted that he was left at perfect liberty to choose between the two. A man's happiness and prosperity, they asserted, depended entirely upon himself; and hence if he were poor and miserable, he was not deserving of any commiseration or pity, since his adverse lot was altogether the consequence of his own de-pravity and misconduct. The following is the account given of the origin and distinguishing tenets of the Sadducees, by the learned Brucker: Antigonus Sochæus, a native of Socho on the borders of Judea, who flourished in the time of Eleazar the high-priest, (or about three hundred years before Christ,) and was a disciple of Simon the Just, offended at the innovations which were introduced by the patrons of the traditionary institutions, and particularly at the pretensions which were made to meritorious works of supererogation, by means of which men hoped to entitle themselves to extraordinary temporal rewards, strenuously maintained and taught, that men ought to serve God, not like slaves for hire, but from a pure and disinterested principle of piety. This refined doctrine, which Antigonus only opposed to the expectation of a temporal recompense for works of religion and charity, his followers misinterpreted, and extended to the rewards of a future life. Sadoc and Baithosus, two of his disciples, taught, that no future recompense was to be expected, and consequently that there would be no resurrection of the dead. This doctrine they taught to their followers; and hence arose, about two hundred years before Christ, the sect of the Baithosæi, or Sadducees. These appellations, derived from the names of the founders of the sect, seem to have been at first used promiscuously; but by degrees the former fell into disuse; which accounts for the silence of the sacred history, and of Josephus, concerning the Baithosæi. The sect of the Sadducees long continued

to flourish in Judea, and to possess great authority.

gence that they were approaching, advanc- | the enemy, and sending scouts abroad for discovery of their motions.

> Upon the return of the spies, he found that their design was to surprise him in

faith from the rest of the nation, they were admitted to sacred privileges and offices, and even to the highest dignity of the priesthood. And notwithstanding the enmity which subsisted between this sect and that of the Pharisees, on account of the contempt with which the Sadducees treated the traditionary law, these sects frequently united in public councils, and in defence of the common cause of religion. Under the reign of Hyrcanus, who about one hundred and thirty years before Christ, possessed the supreme civil and sacerdotal power in Judea, the Sadducees were the leading sect; for that prince, being opposed by the Phari-sees in the execution of the office of high-priest, treated them with great severity, and espoused the Sadducean party, requiring the whole nation, on pain of death, to profess the doctrine of this sect. After the death of Hyrcanus, the persecution of the Pharisees was, for some time, continued by his son, Alexander Jannæus; but Alexandra, the wife of Jannæus, who succeeded him in the government, finding that the Pharisaic sect was more popular than the Sadducean, espoused the interest of the Pharisees, and restored their power and influence. The Sadducees, however, afterwards regained a considerable share of political and eccle-siastical consequence; for we find, that Caiaphas and Ananus, who were both of this sect, possessed in succession the office of high-priest. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the sect of the Sadducees fell into contempt among their countrymen, and even incurred the hatred of the Christians: the emperor Justinian issued a severe edict against them, inflicting banishment, and, in case of obstinate perseverance, even death, upon those who should teach their doctrines. The chief heads of the Sadducean tenets were these: All laws and traditions, not comprehended in the written law, are to be rejected as merely human inventions. Neither angels nor spirits have a distinct existence, separate from their corporeal vestment. The soul of man, therefore, does not remain after this life, but expires with the body. There will be no resurrection of the dead, nor any rewards or punishments after this life. Man is not subjected to irresistible fate, but has the framing of his condition chiefly in his own power. Polygamy ought not to be practised. It has been asserted, that the Sadducees only received, as of sacred authority, the five books of Moses. But the contrary clearly ap-pears from their controversy with the Pharisees, in which the latter appeal to the prophets, and other sacred writings, as well as the law, which they could not have done with any propriety or effect, had not the Sadducees admitted their authority. To this we may add, that had this been the case, it is very improbable that such heresy would have passed without censure. The Sadducees are sometimes ranked with the Epicureans, but improperly: for, though they agreed with them in denying the doctrine of a future state, they differed from Although they differed in fundamental points of them essentially in their ideas of God and provihis quarters: so that he put every thing into a posture of defence, planted his outscouts to the best advantage, and kept his men under arms, informing them of the enemy's design.

dence. Whilst the Epicureans admitted no supreme intelligent ruler of the world, and supposed the gods wholly unconcerned in human affairs, the Sadducees acknowledged the existence of the one true God, the Jehovah of the Jews, and admitted his universal providence, only rejecting the notion of an absolute and uncontrollable influence over the volitions and actions of men: they admitted, too, the reasonableness and obligation of religious worship. Their denial of a future state of rewards and punishments may perhaps be in part ascribed to their belief in the homogeneous nature of man; for Josephus expressly says, that they took away the distinct and permanent nature of the soul. This was, probably, the chief ground of their opposition to Christianity, whose distinguished doctrine is that of the resurrection from the dead .-

Mosheim, Brucker, Jones.

We are not acquainted with the origin of the Essenes, or the etymology of their name. Pliny says, they had been many thousand years in being, living without marriage, and without the other sex. The first book of Maccabees calls them Hasdanim, and says, they were formed into a society before Hircanus was high-priest. The first of the Essenes, mentioned by Josephus, is Judas, in the time of Aristobulus, and Antigonus, son of Hircanus. Suidas, and some others, were of opinion, that the Essenes were a branch of the Rechabites, who subsisted before the captivity. Calmet takes the Chasdim of the Psalms, and the Assideans in the Maccabees, to be their true source. Josephus gives the following account of the Essenes: they live in perfect union, and abhor voluptuousness as a fatal poison: they do not marry; but bring up other men's children as if they were their own, and infuse into them very early their own spirit and maxims: they despise riches, and possess all things in common. Oil and perfumes are prohibited their habitations: they have an austere and mortified air, but without affectation; they always dress in white: they have a steward, who distributes to each what he wants: they are hospitable to their own sect; so that they are not obliged to take provisions with them on their journeys. The children which they educate are all treated and clothed alike, and do not change their dress till their clothes are worn out. trade is carried on by exchange; each giving what is superfluous, to receive what he needs. They do not speak before the sun rises, excepting some prayers taught them by their fathers, which they address to this luminary, as if to incite it to appear: afterwards they work till the fifth hour, near eleven o'clock in the morning. They then meet together, and putting on linen, bathe in fresh water, and retire to their cells, where no strangers enter. From thence they go into their common refectory, which is, as it were, a sacred temple, where they continue in profound silence: they are served with bread, and each has his own decrees of God; and their sect is nearly related

When the officers of Demetrius understood that their plot was discovered, they were greatly embarrassed in what manner to proceed, and at length came to a de-

mess: the priest says grace, after which they eat: they finish their meal also with a prayer: they then pull off their white clothes, which they wore while at table, and return to their work until the evening: at that time they come again to the refectory, and bring their guests with them, if they have any. They are religious observers of their word; their bare promise is as binding as the most sacred oaths: they avoid swearing, as they would perjury: their care over the sick is very particular, and they never suffer them to want any thing: they read carefully the writings of the ancients, and thereby acquire the knowledge of plants, stones, roots, and remedies. Before they admit any who desire it into their sect, they put Before they them to a year's probation, and innre them to the practice of the most uneasy exercises: after this term, they admit them into the common refectory, and the place where they bathe; but not into the interior of the house until after another trial of two years: then they are allowed to make a kind of profession, wherein they engage by horrible oaths to observe the laws of piety, justice, and modesty; fidelity to God and their prince; never to discover the secrets of the sect to strangers; and to preserve the books of their masters, and the names of angels, with great care. If any one violate these engagements, and incur notable guilt, he is expelled, and generally dies of want; because he can receive no food from strangers, being bound to the contrary by his oaths. Sometimes the Essenes, moved with compassion, receive such again, when they have given long and solid proofs of conversion. Next to God, they have the greatest respect to Moses, and for old men. The sabbath is very regularly observed among them; they not only forbear from kindling any fire, or preparing any thing, on that day, but they do not stir any moveable thing, nor attend to the calls of nature. They generally live long, owing to the simplicity of their diet, and the regularity of their lives: they show incredible firmness under tor-ments; they hold the soul to be immortal, and believe that souls descend from the highest air into the bodies animated by them, whither they are drawn by some natural attraction, which they cannot resist; and after death, they swiftly return to the place from whence they came, as if freed from a long and melancholy captivity. In respect to the state of the soul after death, they have almost the same sentiment as the heathen, who place the souls of good men in the Elysian fields, and those of the wicked in Tartarus. Some among them are married: in other respects they agree with the other Essenes. They live separate from their wives while pregnant. Slavery is esteemed by them an injury to human nature; wherefore they have no slaves. Many of them were said to have the gift of prophecy, which is ascribed to their continual reading of the sacred writers; and to their simple and frugal way of living. They believe that nothing happens but according to the

The next morning, by dawn of day, Jonathan marched up with a resolution to

to that of the Pythagoreans among the Greeks. There were women, also, who observed the same institutions and practices. Although the Essenes were the most religious of their nation, yet they did not visit the temple at Jerusalem, nor offer bloody sacrifices: they were afraid of being polluted by other men: they sent their offerings thither; and themselves offered up to God the sacrifices of a clean heart. Philo says, the Essenes were in number of about four thousand in Judea; and Pliny seems to fix their principal abode above En-gedi, where they fed on the fruit of the palmtree. He adds, that they lived at a distance from the sea-shore, for fear of being corrupted by the conversation of strangers. Philo assures us, that in certain cities some of them occasionally resided; but that they usually chose rather to dwell in the fields, and apply themselves to agriculture, and other laborious exercises, which did not take them from their solitude. Their studies were the laws of Moses; especially on sabbath-days, on which they assembled in their synagogues, where each was seated according to his rank; the elder above, the younger below. One of the company read, and another of the most learned expounded. They very much used symbols, allegories, and parables, after the manner of the ancients. We do not see that our Lord has spoken of them, or that he preached among them. It is not impro-bable that John the Baptist lived among them, till he began to baptize and preach. The wilderness, where Pliny places the Essenes, was not very far from Hebron, which is thought by some to be the place of John's birth. The following particulars are from Philo, concerning the Essenes, who may be called Practical, to distinguish them from the Therapeutæ, who may be termed Contemplative Essenes. Some employ themselves in husbandry; others in trades and manufactures, of such things only as are useful in time of peace; their designs being beneficial only. They amass neither gold nor silver, nor make any large acquisitions of land to increase their revenues, but are satisfied with possessing what is requisite to relieve the necessities of life. They are perhaps the only men who without land or money, by choice rather than by necessity, find themselves rich enough; because their wants are but few, and, as they understand how to be content with nothing, as we may say, they always enjoy plenty. You do not find an artificer among them who would make any sort of arms, or warlike machines; they make none of those things, even in time of peace, which men pervert to bad uses: they concern themselves neither with trade nor navigation; lest it should engage them to be avaricious. The method which they follow in their explanation, is to unfold the allegorical meanings of scripture. Their instructions run principally on holiness, equity, justice, economy, policy, the distinction be-tween real good and evil; of what is indifferent, what we ought to pursue, or to avoid. The three

termination to depart under covert of the force the camp; when finding it abandoned, he posted away after the fugitives, but to no purpose; for they had passed the river Eleutherus, into a place of safety, before he could reach them.

> He took his course next into Arabia, ravaged the country of the Nabatheans, took a great many cattle and prisoners, and sold them at Damascus.

> Simon at the same time made a progress through Judea and Palestine, as far as Askalon, where he garrisoned all places of defence: and after fortifying and securing the country, marched to Joppa, took possession of the place, and put a strong guard in it, to keep the inhabitants in awe, who would otherwise have betrayed the town to Demetrius.

> Having thus provided against all casualties, Jonathan and Simon returned to

fundamental maxims of their morality are, the love of God, of virtue, and of our neighbour; they demonstrate their love of God in a constant chastity throughout their lives, in a great aversion from swearing and lying, and in attributing every thing that is good to God, never making him the author of evil; they show their love to virtue in disinterestedness, in dislike of glory and ambtiion, in renouncing pleasure, in continence, patience, and simplicity, in being easily contented, in mortification, modesty, respect for the laws, constancy, and other virtues; lastly, their love to their neighbour appears in their liberality, in the equity of their conduct towards all, and in their community of fortunes, on which it may be proper to enlarge a little. First, no one among them in particular is master of the house where he dwells; any other of the same sect who comes thither, may be as much master as he is. As they live in society, and eat and drink in common, they make provision for the whole community, as well for those who are present, as for those who come unlooked for. There is a common chest in each particular society, where every thing is reserved which is necessary for the support and clothing of each member. Whatever any one gets is brought into the common stock; and, if any one fall sick, so as to be disabled from working, he is supplied with every thing necessary for the recovery of his health, out of the common fund. The younger pay great respect to the elder, and treat them almost in the same manner as children treat their parents in their old age. They choose priests of the most distinguished merit to be receivers of the estates and revenues of their society, who likewise have the charge of issuing what is necessary for the table of the house. There is nothing singular or affected in their way of living; it is simple and unassuming .- Josephus, Calmet.



Jerusalem, where the high-priest summon- | Encouraged by these hopes, Demetrius ing the people together into the temple, proceeded immediately toward them, conset them upon repairing the ruinous walls, both of the city and the holy place; fortifying them with lofty and strong towers; advising them also to erect another wall to cut off all communication between the castle and the city, put good garrisons into other convenient places, and keep the country in a defencible condition.

The people were highly pleased with this counsel, so that he made it his own province to take care of the city, and committed the rest to his brother.

Demetrius, having passed the river, advanced into Mesopotamia, with a design of making himself master, not only of the country, but of Babylon itself; proposing also the reduction of the upper provinces, to make that quarter the seat of war; for the Greeks and Macedonians therein, had sent him several embassies and invitations to come over to them, with assurances, that, upon his appearing, they would submit themselves to his direction, and assist him with their arms against Arsaces the king of Parthia.*

cluding it would be easy to beat Tryphon out of Syria, after one powerful defeat given to the Parthians.

Demetrius posted away towards him, and was received by the people of that country with great acclamations, where he put himself at the head of a brave army, and made war with Arsaces, by whom he was utterly routed, his army destroyed, and himself taken prisoner.

CHAPTER IV.

Jonathan is made prisoner, and his army routed through the treachery of Tryphon .- Succeeded by Simon, who agrees with Tryphon for Jonathan's releasement .- Jonathan murdered by Tryphon .- Simon performs many feats of valour, in the glorious cause of his country.-Farther instances of the perfldy of the traitor, who is at length taken and slain.

THE fall of Demetrius encouraged Tryphon to aspire to the crown; but as his ambitious designs could not be promoted. while Jonathan (a true friend to Antiochus) was in a condition to oppose them, the first thing to be done, was to contrive how to take him off. To this end he went from Antioch to Bethshan, where he found Jonathan with forty thousand men ready to serve him in case of need.

kingdom, increased its power, and rendered it so formidable, that it even disputed the empire of the world with the Romans, and could never be subdued by that nation, which had seen no people on earth unconquered by their arms. It remained a kingdom till the reign of Artabanus, who was killed about the year 229 of the Christian era, and from that time it became a province of the newly established kingdom of Persia, under Artaxerxes. The Parthians were naturally strong and warlike, and were esteemed the most expert horsemen and archers in the world. The peculiar custom of dis-charging their arrows while they were retiring full speed, has been greatly celebrated by the ancients, particularly by the poets, who all observe, that their flight was more formidable than their attacks. This manner of fighting, and the wonderful address and dexterity with which it was performed, gained them many victories. They were addicted much to drinking, and to every manner of lewdness, and their laws permitted them to raise children even by their mothers and sisters.—Lempriere.

^{*} Parthia was a celebrated country of Asia, bounded on the west by Media, south by Carmania, north by Hyrcania, and east by Aria, &c. containing, according to Ptolemy, 25 large cities, the most capital of which was called Hecatompylos, from its hundred gates. Some suppose that the present capital of the country is built on the ruins of Hecatompylos. According to some authors, the Parthians were Scythians by origin, who made an invasion on the more southern provinces of Asia, and at last fixed their residence near Hyrcania. They long remained unknown and unnoticed, and became successively tributary to the empires of the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians. When Alexander invaded Asia, the Parthians submitted, like the other dependent provinces of Persia, and they were for some time under the power of Eumenes, Antigonus, Seleucus Nicanor, and Antiochus, till the rapacity and oppression of Agathocles, a lieutenant of the latter, roused their spirit, and fo-mented rebellion. Arsaces, a man of obscure origin, but blessed with great military powers, placed himself at the head of his countrymen, and laid the foundation of the Parthian empire, about 250 years before the Christian era. The Macedonians attempted in vain to recover it: a race of active and vigilant princes, who assumed the sur-names of Arsacides, from the founder of their

Tryphon finding him in this posture of defence, made use of presents and fair words to inveigle him, when he saw nothing could be effected by force. He gave charge to his officers to pay the same respect and obedience to Jonathan as they did to himself; proposing by these arts of insinuation, to veil the treachery of his heart, and create in him such a trust and confidence as might expose him, for want of caution, to credulity and surprise.

After a long conference upon divers subjects, he advised Jonathan, as the war was at an end, to discharge his army, as an unnecessary burden, retaining only a competent guard about his person, which might go together to Ptolemais, as he was resolved to put himself in possession of that city; "For," says he, "I am come hither to deliver those places into your hands."

Jonathan, not suspecting the fraud of the perfidious Tryphon, dismissed all his army, except three thousand men, two thousand of whom he left in Galilee, and carried the third with him in company with Tryphon to Ptolemais.

He was no sooner entered the town, but the inhabitants, according to their instructions, shut their gates upon him, took him prisoner, and cut off all his soldiers. Part of the army was afterwards sent to Galilee, with an intent to massacre the other two thousand there; but, having timely notice of their treachery to Jonathan, they betook themselves to their arms immediately upon the report, and so made their escape. Tryphon's soldiers were so well pleased with the resolution of these men, that they let them escape without molestation.

The disaster which befell Jonathan, the darling of the whole Jewish nation, struck the inhabitants of Jerusalem with universal terror and consternation, and filled them with the most dreadful apprehensions of impending danger, from the loss of their leader. Nor were their fears without foundation; for the Jews were dispersed as a people destitute of a head.

Tryphon levied an army to make an inroad into Judea. But Simon observing the consternation of the people, called them together, and addressed them in the following manner: "I need not tell you, my friends and countrymen, how frankly I, my father, and my brethren, have exposed ourselves to the utmost difficulty and hazards, in asserting our common liberty; so that it is no new thing for our family to lay down our lives in the defence of our laws and religion; neither am I so insensible of the authority of these domestic examples, as to be wrought upon by any terror to the sacrificing of my honour and my duty, for the saving of my life. Wherefore, without looking any farther for a leader, you have a man before you, who is ready to do or suffer any thing for your preservation and welfare; do but you only follow where I shall lead you. I do not reckon myself better than my brethren; neither do I value my life at a higher rate than they have done; nor am I so degenerate as to think of saving that life by cowardice, when my country and religion are at stake, which our family has ever accounted as the most heroic of their adventures .- No, my friends and brethren, it shall never be said that I have derogated from the dignity of our family. I make no doubt at all, but that God in his good time will, even by my hand, avenge you of your enemies; deliver you, with your wives and children from your oppressors, and vindicate the holy temple against the abominations and violence of your malicious persecutors."

The multitude were so elevated by this speech and declaration of Simon, that they presently took courage, suspended their fears, and revived their spirits, and unanimously exclaimed, "None so fit as Simon to succeed to the command of his brave brothers, Judas and Jonathan; and therefore, let Simon be our general, and whatever he commands shall be obeyed."

The new general collected as many of his people as were fit to bear arms, and set

about the necessary repairs of the fortifi- | tions, of being less zealous than he ought cation of the city; which done, he sent Jonathan the son of Absalom, to Joppa, with orders to turn the inhabitants out of town, lest they should deliver it up to Tryphon, while he continued at Jerusalem to guard that city.

Tryphon was now upon his march with a great army from Ptolemais; and arriving at Judea, brought Jonathan with him in bonds.

Simon met him with his troops near the city of Addida, upon a mountain that overlooked the plain. When Tryphon came to understand that the Jews had chosen Simon for their general, he sent messengers to him, to try if he could circumvent him also by a plot. With this view he sent him word, that if he desired the release of his brother, he might send him an hundred talents* of silver, and two sons of Jonathan with it as hostages, that when he should be set at liberty, he should not seduce Judea from its allegiance to the king, suggesting at the same time, that he was to be kept in custody only till the king's money should be

Simon discerned the fraud; but considering on the one hand, that though he run the danger of losing the money, without obtaining his brother's release, besides the delivery of his sons to the mercy of an enemy, yet there occurred difficulties, on the other hand, no less perplexing; for he was afraid, that upon his denial of the money for a ransom, or the sons for hostages, he should be branded with the odium of being accessary to his brother's death.

Upon this he called a counsel, and told them Tryphon's demands, giving his opinion also, that there was treachery at the bottom, but intimating, that it would be better to send both the money and the sons at a venture, than incur a suspicion, upon not hearkening to Tryphon's condi-

to be for the safety of his brother. Therefore a resolution was taken to send both; though Tryphon, after he had received them, broke his faith and refused to release Jonathan, ranging up and down with his army, and ravaging the country, till he came to Dora, a city of Idumea, with an intention to take that in his way to Jerusalem, Simon keeping pace with him in his marches, and always encamping opposite to his army.

While Tryphon was upon the way, word was brought him from Jerusalem, that the garrison of the citadel was sore distressed for want of provisions, and they desired he would immediately haste to their relief.

Upon this intelligence he ordered his horse to be in readiness, as he would march without any delay to their succour: but there fell so great a snow that night that the roads were impassable. Upon this disappointment he decamped, and went to Cœlo-syria: and passing through the country of Gilead, caused Jonathan, near the city of Baseama, to be slain and buried there; and from thence returned to Antioch. Simon took care, however, to remove his brother's bones to his father's sepulchre at Modin, where he erected a magnificent monument to the honour of his family.+ It was raised upon an eminence that overlooked the whole country. and encompassed with arched walks, resting upon admirable pillars of one entire

He had raised also seven pyramids for

^{*} An hundred Jewish talents in value amounted to thirty-four thousand two hundred and eighteen pounds, fifteen shillings of our money.

⁺ This edifice being erected on an eminence, was seen afar off at sea; and on that coast, was regarded as a good sea mark. Near to the monument were placed the seven pyramids, the whole encompassed with a stately portico, supported by marble pillars, whereon were engraved ships, and arms, and other military ensigns. Josephus tells us, that this whole fabrick was standing entire in his days, and looked upon as a very curious and excellent piece of architecture, and Eusebius mentions it as still in being in his time, which was two hundred years after the time of Josephus .- Prideaux's Connec-

self; a work that was deemed as complete as any of the kind in those days.

This shows the care and zeal of Simon to the honour of his family, and more particularly his respect for the memory of Jonathan, who had now governed the people in the quality both of prince and highpriest for the space of four years, his brother Simon, by the universal suffrage and consent of the people, succeeding him.

Simon had gained so great esteem and authority among the people, that they dated their writings, as well private as public, in such or such a year of Simon the governor of the Jews, and with this addition—the most deserving patron of the nation; for under his administration all things succeeded, both in war and peace, through the advantages he brought to his friends, and the victory he obtained over the common enemy; destroying the cities of Gaza, Joppa, and Jamnia; laying the citadel of Jerusalem level with the ground; and taking it moreover into his care, in order to prevent the same inconveniences for the time to come.

In order to this he recommended digging up and levelling of the mountain that the castle stood upon, so as to leave the temple upon the advantage of the higher ground. Upon this case, he called an assembly, and laid before them what damage they had already suffered from this castle, and what inconvenience they might reasonably expect from it for the time to come, if ever it should fall into the hands of a hostile prince.

This method of reasoning wrought so effectually upon the multitude, that they immediately set upon demolishing the mountain, and plied to it so hard night and day for three years successively, (doing duty by turns,) that in the end, by indefatigable labour, they brought it under the command of the temple.

Soon after the taking Demetrius Nicanor prisoner, Tryphon secretly murdered

his father, mother, four brothers, and him- in the fourth year of his guardianship, giving it out that it was only an unlucky accident in his exercises that brought him to his end. While this rumour was new, Tryphon made interest among the soldiers, through the force of friends and money, to dispose them to the choice of himself for their next governor. They observed, that Demetrius was a prisoner to the Parthians,* and Antiochus would never forget the deserters of his brother.

By this artifice Tryphon paved his way to the crown; nor was much argument required to enforce his cause, as all the people judged it would make their fortune; so that they advanced him to the throne without any farther ceremony. This elevation soon discovered the genuine disposition of the tyrant, who immediately threw of the mask he had artfully assumed to prosecute his designs, and showed himself to be a dissolute wretch in his manners; his adversaries laid hold of it very much to his disadvantage; for the soldiers quickly grew weary of his tyranny, and went over to Cleopatra, the

^{*} The reason of Demetrius's being in this condition in this place, by profane historians is said to be this :- As the Parthians had, at this time, overrun in a manner all the East, and made themselves masters of every country from the river Indus to the Euphrates, those who were of the Macedonian race in those parts, not bearing their usurpation and insolence, invited Demetrius by repeated embassies to come to their relief, promising him a general revolt from the Parthians, and such assistance of forces against them, as would enable him to suppress these usurpers, and recover to his dominions all the provinces of the East. Upon confidence in these promises, he undertook the expedition; and found, as soon as he appeared, that the Elymæans, the Persians, and the Bactrians declared for him. By the assistance of these nations he overthrew the Parthians in several conflicts; but, at last, under the show of a treaty of peace, being drawn into a snare, he was made prisoner, and all his army cut to pieces. The king that reigned in Parthia at this time was Mithridates the son of Priapatites, who, having thus gotten Demetrius into his power, carried him round the revolted provinces, that by seeing the prince, whom they confided in, reduced to this ignominious condition, they might more easily be brought to submit to their former yoke; but, when he had done this, he allowed him a maintenance suitable to the state of a king, and gave him one of his daughters, whose name was his pupil Antiochus, the son of Alexander, Rhodaguna, in marriage. - Justin and Orosus,

wife of Demetrius, who had then shut up herself in Seleucia with her children, while Antiochus, (otherwise called Sidetes,* and the brother of Demetrius,) went roving up and down from place to place.

Cleopatra, prompted by the encouragement of the military men that deserted Tryphon, at the instance and persuasion of friends, and the apprehension she herself had of the Seleucians giving up the town to him, sent a messenger to Antiochus, with a proposal of marriage, and a tender of her kingdom to him, as well as of her person. Antiochus embraced the proposal; and upon closing with Cleopatra on those terms, the people came in to him in such numbers, that in a short time he was at the head of a considerable army, made war upon Tryphon, overcame him in a battle, and beating him out of Syria, pursued him to Phœnicia,+ besetting him at

* He was much given to hunting, and had the name Sidetes, that is, the Hunter, given him, from zidah, a word of that signification in the

Syrian language.

wife of Demetrius, who had then shut up last in Dora, a strong and well fortified

[BOOK IX.

He sent ambassadors also to Simon the high-priest of the Jews, upon a treaty of

manner the barrenness of Phænicia directed the attention of its inhabitants to maritime pursuits. Possessing only a narrow slip of land on the coast of the Mediterranean, and dependent for subsistence on the scanty productions of an ungrateful soil, the sea became their only resource. Fishing, their aucient mode of subsistence, had taught them the art of navigation. The forests of Lebanon abounded with timber proper for the construction of ships. Nature had formed several commodious harbours on their coasts, which, for their greater security, they defended with moles. Their manufactures and exports of native produce were not numerous, but they were valuable. The sea sand led them to discover the secret of making glass; their soil, notwithstanding its infertility, supplied the materials of fine linen; and their ingenuity fashioned curious productions in wood and metals. From the murex, which they caught in great plenty on their coasts, they extracted the rich dye of their famous purple, so highly valued by all the nations of antiquity. Thus they established a commerce for articles of taste and luxury, the most productive and beneficial of all. As the Egyptians and Assyrians neglected or despised external commerce, the Phœnicians became the carriers of all nations, and derived from their own labours those blessings which nature seemed to have denied them. Like the Venetians and the Dutch in modern times, necessity taught them inventions; deprived of natural advantages, they acquired that spirit of ingenious industry which is the parent of opulence; and destitute of rich possessions by land, they sought and obtained the dominion of the sea. The form of their government also favoured the progress and success of the Phænicians in commercial affairs. The same spirit of freedom and independence, by which they were actuated in the wilderness and on the shores of the Arabian gulf, continued to distinguish them when they lived under the govern-ment of princes in walled and fortified cities. Their country, though small, was divided into five petty principalities, each under its own chief, who, though invested with sovereign dignity, had not sufficient power to make encroachments on the rights and liberties of the subject. It is the secure possession of property from the invasions of des-potism, that gives vigour to industry, and spirit to enterprise. Commerce must ever flourish most in republican states, or in limited monarchies, where the possession of wealth raises to distinction in the state, and where the royal authority is exercised not for the oppression, but the protection of the subject. No less conducive to their commercial prosperity and greatness, was the admirable policy of the Phænicians in levelling all distinctions between natives and foreigners, and throwing their ports open to the whole world. The encouragement which they gave to the artists, manufacturers, and merchants of other nations, together with the freedom of their government, and the equity of their laws, tempted the most expert men in every

⁺ The inhabitants of this country are said to have migrated at an early period from the northern shores of the Arabian gulf. There they had lived in caverns formed by nature in the range of hills that ran along the sea-coast, and spread by degrees into the deserts, where they roamed without a fixed habitation, and found a temporary shelter under the branches of the thorn, or in the hollow of a rock. They were unacquainted with agriculture, and had no property in flocks or herds: by the sea-shore they lived on fish and marine animals; in the desert they fed on locusts, and the scanty fruits that grew wild in the woods. From this wretched way of life they were called Horites by the Hebrews, and Troglodytes by the Greeks; both appellations alluding to their living in holes and caverns. Held in detestation by the other tribes, who were occupied in tending cattle or in cultivating the earth, necessity made them bold and inventive. They were the first that navigated the Red sea on a wretched float made of the branches of trees fastened together, in order to procure a livelihood by fishing. Such was the origin of a people, whose fame extended to the most distant climates, and has been transmitted to succeeding ages. The character and genius of nations arise from their physical and political situation. abundant fertility of Egypt, the want of timber to build ships, and their superstitious horror at the sea, prevented the inhabitants from applying to foreign trade, and limited their industry to improvements in agriculture and in land traffic. In like

and soon after sent him a supply of provisions and money for the carrying on of the siege, which was a service at that time so acceptable to Antiochus, that he looked

alliance, who frankly accepted of his terms, | upon him as his best friend; but Tryphon made his escape out of Dora, and fled to Apamea, where the town was taken, and himself slain, after he had held the government three years.

profession to settle in their territories, and of course to contribute to their improvement and opulence.

Tros, Tyriusve mihi nullo discrimine agetur,

breathes the true spirit of Phænician superiority to narrow prejudices, and was as distinguished an example of political toleration among the ancients, as the similar conduct of the Dutch was of religious toleration in modern times. This liberal maxim had no small influence in making the city of Tyre the theatre of human ingenuity; the first emporium to the nations of the known world; and the grand repository of every thing which could administer to the necessities, the conveniences, and the luxuries of mankind. The situation of the Phænicians was admirably adapted to extend their commercial intercourse to every part of the earth: possessing a part of Asia, and placed on the confines of Africa and Europe, if they did not form a centre of interest and union to the inhabitants of the globe, they at least had it in their power to communicate to every nation the benefits of every climate. were difficulties, however, in ancient navigation, which prevented or retarded their establishing such an universal intercourse and commerce among nations. Of all the arts which have attracted the study or contemplation of mankind, none is more surprising in the rise, from its early efforts to its subsequent improvement, than that of navigation. From the small canoe, in which the Indian descends his native river, or ventures out into the adjacent ocean, to the noble and majestic edifice containing a thousand men, with provisions and accommodations for many months, and conveying all this vast apparatus on the wings of the wind, across immense seas, to the most distant shores, the progress is so prodigious and astonishing as to give us the highest idea of the human powers when enlightened and enlarged by the experience of many centuries. As the first form of vessels adapted to navigation must have been extremely rude, the method of conducting them was no less awkward and defective. Skill, as well as experience, was required to assist the efforts of the rowers by the ac-tion of the winds. The method of arresting a ship in its course, by means of that simple, but admirable machine the anchor, must have been long unknown. The discoveries of modern times, which, by ascertaining the polarity of the magnet, determined the distance from land, and to trace the paths of the ocean, were concealed from the early mariners, who had no other method of directing their course, than by observing the course of the sun, and the position of the stars. Their navigation of consequence was timid and uncertain. They crept along the shores, and cautiously avoided losing sight of land. Years were requisite for performing voyages which are now finished in a few months. Even in the mildest climates, and on the calmest seas, it was only during the summer season that maritime enterprises were pursued. It would

have been deemed hazardous to an extreme, by the ancient mariners, to have braved the fury of the elements, and the surges of the ocean, during the winter months. Under all these disadvantages, however, the active and persevering spirit of the Phœnicians exerted itself in naval and commercial enterprises. The history of this people furnishes a remarkable proof of the wonders which industry can perform, and of the opulence to which commerce can raise a nation which applies to it with ardour. From the enumeration of the countries to which the Phænicians traded, of the cities which they built, and the colonies which they planted, in the various and distant parts of the world, an idea may be formed of the greatness and extent of their commerce. As in ancient times the nations of the earth had little intercourse or connections with each other, the Phoenicians were employed as factors and carriers to all their neighbours, and became masters of all the trade that was carried on in the known world. Their ships conveyed the productions of every climate: and the empire of the sea was in their possession. Other nations applied to them when any great maritime enterprise or distant expedition was to be undertaken. The fleets which Solomon fitted out, to sail from the Red sea to Ophir and Tarshish, probably on the eastern coast of Ethiopia, were conducted by Phœnician pilots, who had been accustomed to visit these countries before the time of Solomon. was to Phœnician mariners that Necho, king of Egypt, above 610 years before Christ, gave the extraordinary commission to circumnavigate Africa. That prince sent a Phænician fleet from the borders of the Red sea, with injunctions to keep along the African coasts, to make the tour of them, and to return to Egypt by entering the Mediterranean at the pillars of Hercules or straits of Gibraltar. The Phœnicians taking their departure from the Red sea, entered the Southern Ocean, and constantly followed the coasts. After having employed two seasons in this navigation, they doubled the southern promontory of Africa, and arriving at the pillars of Hercules, entered the Mediterranean, and reached the mouths of the Nile in the third year of their voyage. Sacred and profane history agree in extolling the opulence and power of the Phœnicians. When the Israelites invaded Palestine, gold and silver abounded in that country; magnificence and luxury reigned in private apartments; the sovereigns of the little districts into which it was divided, were clothed in purple; the people wore golden ear-rings; and even the camels were adorned with studs, chains, and plates of gold. The Babylonian cloak, the most superb article of dress among the Romans in the period of their greatest luxury, was frequent among the spoils of Canaan. At the time of the Trojan war, the immense riches of Sidon were diffused among the neighbouring nations, and supplied them with all that could contribute to regal pomp and ostenta-

CHAPTER V.

Treachery of Antiochus and Ptolemy, towards Simon, who is murdered at the instigation of the latter.—Hyrcanus succeeds to the pontificate.—Glorious resolution of his mother, who is at length put to death by Ptolemy.—Hyrcanus faithfully espouses the cause of the Jews, makes several alliances in their favour.—Various fortunes of divers Eastern princes.

Antiochus Sidetes being naturally covetous, and consequently ungrateful, was so far from acknowledging the good offices Simon had done him, that he sent an army under the command of Cendebeus to lay Judea waste, and to seize upon his person.

This perfidious indignity put the good old man into such a rage, that, forgetting the infirmities of his age, he marched immediately at the head of an army with the resolution of a hero in the prime of his youth, to engage the enemy; sending his son before him with some of his choicest troops, and himself following with the rest, planting ambushes up and down in his avenues, and ordering all things to his utmost satisfaction.

When Simon had been eight years governor of Judea, he was treacherously murdered by his son-in-law Ptolemy, upon an invitation to an entertainment. had his wife and two sons already in his custody, and his ruffians were despatched abroad to take his third son John, otherwise called Hyrcanus, and kill him; but the young man having notice of the danger, took sanctuary in Jerusalem, where the people treated him with the utmost affection, partly for the love and veneration they had for the memory of his father, and partly from the aversion they had to Ptolemy, whom they bravely repulsed upon an attempt to enter at one gate, because they had already received Hyrcanus at another.

tious magnificence. The commerce, opulence, and splendour of Phænicia, continued to increase till the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.—Rutherford's Ancient History.

Upon this indignity Ptolemy withdrew himself to a castle not far from Jericho called Dagon. Hyrcanus at the same time entered upon the pontificate, and officiated as successor to his father. first thing he did upon his entrance into that solemn order, was to offer up sacrifices and praises in due form; which duty being over, he marched to the assault of the fort; where the only difficulty he met with, was to support the effect of his tenderness for his mother and his brethren, whom Ptolemy exposed from the top of the wall, lashing and tormenting them in the sight of all the people, with menaces to cast them headlong from the battlements, unless Hyrcanus immediately abandoned the siege.

Hyrcanus judging at first that the slower he was in his attack, the more lenity Ptolemy would show to his relations, paused with himself on his future proceedings; but his mother observing him deliberate and relent, called out to him aloud, and encouraged him both with her hand and voice, to make a right use of that barbarous spectacle, and without any regard to her and her children's sufferings, to do himself and his family right, in a just vengeance upon the head of that execrable monster; for she herself desired nothing more than to expire in torment, on condition that that unnatural tyrant might be punished according his desert.

The amazing bravery of this woman determined Hyrcanus, at all events, to pursue his resolution; but observing that the more they pressed upon the fort, the fiercer Ptolemy was in his tortures on his mother, resentment and revenge gave way to the over-ruling softness of a dutiful son; so that through irresolution and distraction, the siege was protracted till the sabbatical year, (the seventh year being a year of rest to the Jews, as well as the seventh of days,) Ptolemy was now delivered from the war and the siege; and thereupon putting to death the mother and the brother of Hyrcanus, he withdrew

to Zeno, surnamed Cotyla, a tyrant who had at that time usurped the government of Philadelphia.*

Antiochus had not as yet forgotten or forgiven the repulses and disgraces he had formerly received from Simon the father of Hyrcanus; so that he made an inroad into Judea in the fourth year of his reign, when he ravaged the country and drove Hyrcanus into the city, dividing his army into seven bodies round about it. They advanced but slowly at the beginning, the walls being very strong, and the place well defended.

The camp was for some time distressed for water; but that defect was plentifully supplied by a great fall of rain.

Upon a review of the place, they found it most accessible on the north side, and therefore carried on their attack principally upon that quarter, raising a hundred turrets of three stories high, which were well lined with soldiers to carry on the siege. They had likewise drawn a circumvallation of a great length and depth, to cut off all communication. But this did not hinder the defendants from making certain sallies, when at any time they saw the besiegers off their guard; but if they found them in a posture to receive them, they would make their retreat.

As there were many unserviceable persons, who wasted the provisions, Hyrcanus separated those that were fit to bear arms from the rest, and turned all the useless people out of the city; where, between Antiochus on the one hand, that stopped them from going any further, and Hyrca-

nus on the other, that would not let them come in, many of the poor wretches perished for want of bread.

It was now the time of the feast of tabernacles; and upon this festival, these miserable creatures were admitted into the town; whereupon the inhabitants addressed themselves to Antiochus, only to grant a truce for seven days, in honour of the solemnity; which, out of a motive of religion, he readily granted, and also sent them magnificent presents for sacrifices, as bulls with gilded horns, cups of gold and silver, replenished with precious spices and perfumes; and, in fine, treated them in a manner much different from that of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, in affront to their religion, upon the taking of the temple, sacrificed hogs upon the altar, and profaned the holy place with swine's flesh, in a contempt of their laws and ceremonies, which proved the cause of an irreconcileable animosity between them; whereas the present Antiochus had the character and surname of Pious given him, in honour of the reverence he had for religion.

Hyrcanus took encouragement upon this instance of the king's justice and goodness, to move him by an embassy on the Jews' behalf, for the liberty only of living one with another, according to the laws and customs of their country. The court faction, on the contrary, were for having them wholly cut off, as an unsociable sort of people, that would be thought holier and wiser than their neighbours, and valued themselves upon singularity from the rest of the world, in their lives and manners. But the king had too great a respect for their piety to put them to extremities; so that he sent word back to Hyrcanus, that upon condition the besieged would deliver up their army, undertake for the taxes of Joppa, and the rest of the cities about Judea, and receive a garrison into the town of his appointment, he was ready to put an end to the

^{*} A city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, where was one of the seven Asiatic churches, Rev. iii. 7. Philadelphia was so called from Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, by whom it was founded. It stood on a branch of mount Tmolus, by the river Cogamus, about twenty-eight miles east of Sardis. It greatly suffered by frequent earthquakes, owing to its vicinity to Catakekaumene; and it was anciently matter of surprise that it was not on this account abandoned. It is now a mean but considerable town, of large extent, with a population of about 1000 Greek Christians, who have a resident bishop, and about 20 inferior Elergy.—Calmet.

The Jews agreed to every article but the receiving of the garrison, out of a regard to the scruple they made of intermixing with strangers; but to be eased of that article, they proposed rather to give the king hostages for the performance of covenants, and five hundred talents over and above, which were accepted, three hundred of them being paid down in part; and the brother of Hyrcanus becoming one of the pledges. Upon the finishing of this treaty, the works and the battlements were thrown down, the city dismantled, and the siege raised.

Hyrcanus, after this, caused the monument of David to be opened, where he took three thousand talents to his own use,* and furnished himself with foreign

* David had now been dead near nine hundred years, and what is told of this treasure, supposes it to have been buried with him all this time. It supposes, that as oft as the city of Jerusalem, the palace, and the temple, during the reigns of the kings of Judah, had been plundered of all their wealth and treasure by prevailing enemies, this dead stock still remained safe from all rifle or violation. It supposes, that, as oft as these kings were forced to take all the treasure that was found in the house of the Lord, as well as in their own, to relieve the exigencles of the state, they never meddled with this, that was uselessly buried with David in his grave. It supposes, that when one of the worst of their kings plundered the temple of its sacred vessels, and cut them in pieces, to melt them down into money for his common occasions; and that, when one of the best of them was forced to cut off the gold, wherewith the gates and pillars of the temple were overlaid, to bribe a destroying enemy, this useless treasure still continued untouched. Nay, it supposes, that, when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed both the city and temple of Jerusalem, so that, for many years they both lay in rubbish, this treasure in David's sepulchre lay, all the while, safe and secure under it; and that, when Antiochus Epiphanes, in like manner, destroyed the city, and robbed the temple of all that he could find, this treasure still escaped his rapacious hands, nor was ever molested, till Hyrcanus, at this time, was forced to make bold with it;—all which suppositions seem highly improbable. There is this, however, to be said in the matter, that, as there certainly was a bank, or treasury in the temple, where money was laid up for the support of the poor, for the relief of widows and fatherless children, and for the maintenance of divine service; and where the great men, and rich men of the nation, were used to deposit their wealth, for its better security: it is not improbable, that, upon the account of the frequent invasions and depredations

The Jews agreed to every article but mercenaries, being the first of the nation e receiving of the garrison, out of a re-

He then entered into a league with Antiochus Sidetes, invited him and his army into the city, where he gave them a splendid and magnificent reception, and followed him afterward with his auxiliaries into the Parthian war, as we have it upon the authority of Nicolaus Damascenus.

Antiochus at length came to battle with Phraortes, king of the Parthians, in which action he lost both his life and his army.

His brother Demetrius succeeded to the kingdom of Syria, being set at liberty by Phraortes, upon this invasion of Antiochus.

Hyrcanus, after the death of Antiochus, marched with his army into Syria, hoping, as it afterwards proved, that he should find the country in some measure deserted.

In six months, with some difficulty, he took Medaba, Samega, and other places

they were liable to, this treasure might be kept in some secret and subterraneous place, unknown to all, but such as were at the head of affairs; that Hyrcanus, being now under great difficulty to raise money, might borrow it out of this bank, till better times enabled him to repay it; and that Herod, when he plundered it quite, might trump up this plausible story, that it neither belonged to church, nor poor, nor any private person, but had been deposited there by David and his successors, as a proper supply for the state in times of need.—

Prideaux's Connection, and Universal History.

+ The army, which, together with its attendants, amounted to the number of near four hundred thousand persons, being forced to disperse all over the country, were quartered at too great a distance from each other to be able in any time to gather together in a body; and, as they had grievously oppressed all places, wherever they lay, the inhabitants took the advantage of this their dispersion, and conspired with the Parthians, in one and the same day, to fall upon them in their several quarters, and cut their throats; which accordingly they did, and, when Antiochus, with the forces which he had about him hastened to the assistance of the quarters that were near him, he was overpowered, and slain, so that, of this numerous army, there scarce returned a man into Syria, to carry the doleful news of this terrible overthrow. Phraortes however, (who was then king of Parthia,) caused the body of Antiochus to be taken up from among the dead, and having put it in a silver coffin, sent it honourably into Syria, to be there buried among his ancestors; and finding a daughter of his among the captives, he was smitten with her beauty, and took her to wife. - Justin and Joseph.

thereabout; and afterwards Shechem and letters upon that subject. These letters Gerizim, with the land of the Cuthites, being read and debated, an alliance was where the temple stood, that with Alexander's permission was built after the model of that at Jerusalem by Sanballat, one of his governors, to gratify his son-in-law Manasseh, the brother of the high-priest Jaddua, which temple was destroyed about two hundred years after.

Hyrcanus also took several places in Idumea, as Dora and Marissa; and at last, when he had subdued the whole province, he made proclamation for all people to depart the land that would not submit to be circumcised. So rather than quit their country, they not only complied in the point of circumcision, but also in all the other rites and ceremonies of the Jews.*

Hyrcanus, the high-priest, being now about to renew a league with the Romans, sent his ambassadors to the senate,+ with

* Among the Jews there were two sorts of proselytes, namely, the proselytes of the gate, and the proselytes of justice. 1. The proselytes of the gate were so called, because they were permitted to dwell with the Jews in the same cities, and the occasion of their name seems to have been taken from that expression in the fourth commandment: "The strangers which are within thy gates;" where the word Ger, which we render strangers, does every whit as properly signify proselytes. Now this kind of proselytes was obliged only to renounce idolatry, and to worship God according to the law of nature, which the doctors of the Talmud reduced to seven articles, called by them the seven precepts of the sons of Noah. Whoever performed these were looked upon as in a state of acceptance with God; and allowed not only to live quietly in their cities, but to resort likewise to their temple, there to offer up their prayers; but then they were permitted to enter no farther than into the outer court, which was called the court of the Gentiles. 2. The proselytes of justice were so called, because they took upon them to observe the whole law, both moral and ceremonial, in the latter of which some of the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, made justification to consist. The former sort of proselytes had no form of initiation, but these were admitted by baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision; and, when they were thus admitted, they were received into the Jewish church, and to all the rights and privileges of church-membership, in the same manner as if they had been natural Jews .- Beausobre, Prideaux.

+ The senate had the ordinary administration of the revenue, took account of its receipts and disbursements, and suffered no money to be issued without their own decree, or the warrant of the consul in actual service. Even the money decreed the Campus Martius .- Lempriere.

concluded upon the following conditions: "Fanius, the son of Marus the prætor, called a senate in the Field of Mars, t on the eighth day of the Ides of February; present Lucius Manlius, and Caius Sempronius, upon the business of the embassy of Simon, Apollonius, and Diodorus, persons of honour and probity, and deputed by the nation of the Jews to treat about an alliance, and other public matters with the senate of Rome. Whereupon it was agreed that Joppa, and the ports of Gazara, with the fountains, and other places

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by the censors for the repair of public buildings, and the execution of public works, could not be issued by the quæstors without an act of the senate to authorize it. All crimes and disorders that were committed among the free inhabitants of Italy, or municipal allies of the state, all disputes of a private or public nature that arose among them, came under the jurisdiction and determination of the senate. All foreign embassies were received or despatched, and all negotiations were conducted by this body. In such matters, the people did no more than affirm or reverse what the senate, after mature deliberation, had decreed, and for the most part gave their consent as a matter of form; insomuch, that while persons, who observed the high executive powers of the consul, considered the state as monarchical, foreigners, on the contrary, who resorted on public business to Rome, were apt to believe it an aristocracy vested in the senate. - Ferguson. .

The Field of Mars, or Campus Martius, was a large plain or meadow at Rome, which lay on the banks of the Tiber, a little above the city, where the Roman youth performed their exercises, and learnt to wrestle and box, to throw the discus, hurl the javelin, ride a horse, drive a chariot, &c. The public assemblies were held there, and the officers of state chosen, and audience given to foreign ambassadors. It was adorned with statues, columns, arches, and porticoes, and its pleasant situation made it very frequented. It was called Martius, because it was dedicated to Mars. It was sometimes called Tiberinus, from its closeness to the Tiber. It was given to the Roman people by a vestal virgin: but they were deprived of it by Tarquin the Proud, who made it a private field, and sowed corn in it. When Tarquin was driven from Rome, the people recovered it, and threw away into the Tiber the corn which had grown there, deeming it unlawful for any man to eat of the produce of that land. The sheaves which were thrown into the river stopped in a shallow ford, and by the accumulated collection of mud became firm ground, and formed an island, which was called the Holy Island, or the island of Æsculapins. Dead carcasses were generally burnt in

that had beer taken away by Antiochus, contrary to a decree of the senate, should be all restored, and the king's soldiers not permitted to pass through either that, or any other part of the territory, without leave. That whatever had been done by Antiochus in the late war, should be declared void, and commissioners appointed to take an estimate of what the people had suffered in their lands and goods by his depredations; and to see reparation made for all losses."

Upon these conditions, the senate was pleased to accept of the proposals that were presented to them by these honourable persons, in the name of their good friends and allies, the people of the Jews.

Fanius had orders likewise to furnish the ambassadors with money to defray their charges back out of the public stock; this he accordingly did, with recommendatory letters to all governors and officers in their way, for the convenience and securi-

ty of their passage.

The success of Hyrcanus did not fail to excite the envy of Demetrius, who would willingly have come to an open rupture with him, could he have formed a proper alliance: but the Syrians and his own soldiers hated him to that degree for his lewdness, that they joined in a confederacy against him, requesting Ptolemy Physcon,* king of Egypt, to send them some branch of Seleucus's family, and they would make him king.

Upon this application, Physcon sent them one Alexander, surnamed Zebin, with a considerable body of men. An engagement ensued, and Demetrius being routed, he fled to his wife Cleopatra,

barbarities rendered him odious, but as no one attempted to rid Egypt of her tyranny, the Alexandrians abandoned their habitations, and fled from a place which continually streamed with the blood of their massacred fellow-citizens. If their migration proved fatal to the commerce and prosperity of Alexandria, it was of the most essential service to the countries where they retired; and the num-bers of Egyptians that sought a safer asylum in Greek and Asia, introduced among the inhabitants of those countries the different professions that were practised with success in the capital of Egypt. Physcon endeavoured to repeople the city which his cruelty had laid desolate, but the fear of sharing the fate of the former inhabitants, prevailed more than the promise of riches, rights, and immunities. The king at last disgusted with Cleopatra, repudiated her and married her daughter by Philometor, called also Cleopatra. He still continued to exercise the greatest cruelty upon his subjects, but the prudence and vigilance of his ministers kept the people in tranquillity, till all Egypt revolted, when the king had basely murdered all the young men of Alexandria. Without friends or support in Egypt, he fled to Cyprus, and Cleopatra the divorced queen, ascended the throne. In his banishment Physcon dreaded lest the Alexandrians should also place the crown on the head of his son, by his sister Cleopatra, who was then governor of Cyrene, and under these apprehensions he sent for the young prince, called Memphitis, to Cyprus, and murdered him as soon as he reached the shore. To make the barbarity more complete, he sent the limbs of Memphitis to Cleopatra, and they were received as the queen was going to celebrate her birth-day. Soon after this he invaded Egypt with an army, and obtained a victory over the forces of Cleopatra, who being left without friends or assistance, fled to her eldest daughter Cleopatra, who had married Demetrius king of Syria. This decisive blow restored Physion to his throne, where he continued to reign for some time, hated by his subjects, and feared by his enemies. He died at Alexandria in the sixty-seventh year of his age, after a reign of twenty-nine years, about 116 years before Christ. Some authors have extolled Physcon for his fondness for literature; they have observed, that from his extensive knowledge, he was called the philologist, and that he wrote a comment upon Homer, besides, a history in twen-ty-four books admired for its elegance, and often

quoted by succeeding authors, whose pen was employed on the same subject.—Lempriere.

† This Cleopatra was the daughter of Ptolemy Philometor king of Egypt and Cleopatra his wife. She was at first married to Alexander Balas, and afterwards to this Demetrius in her father's lifetime. While Demetrius was detained a prisoner in Parthia, she became the wife of his brother Antiochus Sidetes; but upon the death of Sidetes, the restoration of Demetrius and recovery of his king

^{*} Ptolemy, surnamed Physcon on account of the prominence of his belly, ascended the throne of Egypt after the death of his brother Philometor, and as he had reigned for some time conjointly with him, his succession was approved, though the wife and the son of the deceased monarch laid claims to the crown. Cleopatra was supported in her claims by the Jews, and it was at last agreed that Physcon should marry the queen, and that her son should succeed to the throne at his death. The nuptials were accordingly celebrated, but on that very day the tyrant murdered Cleopatra's son in her arms. He ordered himself to be called Euergetes, but the Alexandrians refused to do it, and stigmatized him with the appellation of Kakergetes, or evil-doer, a surname which he deserved by his tyranny and oppression. A series of

who was then at Ptolemais for protection; off from the Macedonians, and had no more but the gates being shut against him, he fled to Tyre, where he fell into the hands of his enemies, who kept him a while in anguish, and then put him to death.

Alexander Zebina, being now possessed of the kingdom of Syria, entered into a league with Hyrcanus the high-priest, who was engaged some time after in a war with Antiochus Grypus, the son of Demetrius. It came to a battle, and Alexander was slain in the engagement.*

Antiochus by this means came to be king of Syria; but durst not as yet make any attempt upon the Jews, for he heard that Antiochus Cyzicenus was at that time levying an army against him in the town of Cyzicus.+ Wherefore, without attempting any thing against the Jews, he thought it most adviseable to keep himself upon his guard against his brother, who was called Cyzicenus, from the name of the place where he received his education.

Upon the coming of Antiochus Cyzicenus into Syria, the brothers were perpetually at war, and Hyrcanus consequently in possession of a profound peace; for after the slaughter of Antiochus, he fell

concern with them, either as an ally or subject.

In the days of Alexander Zebina, affairs prospered with Hyrcanus according to his utmost desire, and also in the reign of the two brothers; for while they were harassing one another, he enjoyed the revenues of Judea, whereby he amassed an inestimable treasure; and while Cyzicenus ravaged the country on the one hand, and his brother had no relief out of Egypt on the other, he left them to themselves to confound one another, which tended ultimately to the establishment of his prosperity.

CHAPTER VI.

Hyrcanus invests Samaria, which is afflicted by dreadful famine .- Various fortunes of Hyrcanus and Antiochus, who wage war against each other .- Death of Antiochus .- Destruction of Samaria.-Hyrcanus espouses the part of the sect of the Sadducees .- Pays the debt of nature.- Is succeeded by Antiochus, who changes the Jewish government, and evinces a very preverse and impious disposition .- Is chastised by a very sore judgment; and, before his death, confesses his iniquitous con-

Hyrcanus, under these circumstances, marched with an army to the strong city of Samaria; being so irritated against them by the indignities they had put upon the people of Marissa, t who were inhabitants and allies of Judea, though subjected to the king of Syria, that he resolved to attack the place with all his vigour.

dom, she returned to his bed again, but never had any great esteem for him, because in his captivity he had married the daughter of the king of Parthia .- Prideaux's Connection.

* After Zebina was vanquished and slain, Grypus, so called from his hook-nose, began to take on him the authority as well as name of king; whereby the power of Cleopatra in the government becoming very much eclipsed, she could not bear this diminution of her grandeur and domination, and accordingly resolved to make away with Grypus. Having provided a cup of poison for executing this wicked design, she offered it to Grypus one day as he came hot and weary from exercising himself; but being forewarned of the mischief she intended him, he forced her to drink it all herself,-and it had its full operation upon her.

-Prideaux. † Antiochus Cyzicenus was half brother to Grypus. He was the son of Cleopatra by Antiochus Sidetes, born to him while Demetrius her former husband was a prisoner among the Parthians. Cleopatra, afraid that his life might be endangered by Demetrius, sent him out of his reach to Cyzicus, a city lying on the Propontis in the Lesser Mysia, and from hence he had the name of Cyzicenus.

[†] Marissa, or Mareshah, a city of Judah; called also Moresheth and Morasthi. The prophet Mi-cah was a native of this city. It was two miles from Eleutheropolis; and near to it, in the vale of Zephathah, was fought a famous battle between Asa, king of Judah, and Zerah, king of Chus, in which Asa defeated a million of men. In the latter times of the Jewish commonwealth, Mareshah belonged to Idumæa, as did several other southerly cities of Judah. It was peopled by the Jews and their allies in the time of John Hyrcanus. Alexander Jannæus took it from the Arabians, and Pompey restored it to its first inhabi-tants. Gabinius rebuilt it, and the Parthians destroyed it in the war of Antigonus against Herod. - Calmet.

rounded the town with a large ditch, and not the least mark left of any building. a double wall of eighty furlongs compass, and gave the conduct of the siege to his sons Antigonus and Aristobulus, who carried it on with such vigour, and kept them in so close, that they were forced to the extremity of eating carrion; so that in the end they implored the assistance of Antiochus Cyzicenus, who came immediately; but being routed by Aristobulus, and pursued by him and his brother as far as Scythopolis, with some loss, escaped.

The brothers, after this action, returned, and forcing the people into the town again, renewed the siege, which produced a repeated application to the same Antiochus for succour, who prevailed with Ptolemy Lathyrus for six thousand men; but the assistance was granted so much against the approbation of Cleopatra his mother, that he had well nigh caused the loss of his kingdom.

With this band of Egyptians, Antiochus at first ravaged the country of Hyrcanus, not being at that time in a condition to sustain his inroads. His design was, by this diversion, to draw him from the siege; but through surprises, desertions, and other casualties, he found his party in a short time so weakened that he committed the charge of the Jewish war to Callimander and Epicrates, and went off from thence himself to Tripoli.

Callimander, after this, with more bravery than discretion, ventured upon a rash encounter, where his people where wholly cut off, and himself slain. Epicrates, at the same time, treacherously betrayed Scythopolis, and several other neighbouring towns, to the Jews, so that there was no possibility of relieving the place.

Hyrcanus had been a full year before Samaria when he took it; nor was he content with reducing the city, without rasing the foundations; for he not only made it a heap of rubbish, but drew several trenches of water through it, which so disfigured

Upon sitting down before it, he sur- the face of every thing, that there was

The Jews prospered at this juncture, not only at Jerusalem, but at Alexandria also, and the rest of Egypt, Cyprus, &c. For the queen Cleopatra, upon a difference with her son Ptolemy Lathyrus, committed the command of her troops to Chelcias and Ananias, the sons of that Onias who erected a temple in the territory of Heliopolis, after the pattern of that of Jerusalem.

These two persons were the queen's directors in all she did, according to the testimony of Strabo* the Cappadocian, who writes to the following effect: "That many of those that either came formerly with them to Cyprus, or were sent thither afterward by Cleopatra, immediately quitted the queen's interest, and went over to Ptolemy; only the Jews that were of Onias's party stood firm, out of a reverence they paid the queen for the respect

^{*} He was a native of Amasia, on the borders of Cappadocia, who flourished in the age of Augustus and Tiberius. He first studied under Xenarchus, the peripatetic, and afterwards warmly embraced the tenets of the Stoics. Of all his compositions nothing remains but his geography, divided into seventeen books, a work justly celebrated for its elegance, purity, the erudition, and universal knowledge of the author. It contains an account in Greek, of the most celebrated places of the world, the origin, the manners, religion, prejudices, and government of nations; the foundation of cities, and the accurate history of each separate province. Strabo travelled over a great part of the world in quest of information, and to examine with the most critical inquiry, not only the situation of the places, but also the manners of the inhabitants, whose history he meant to write. In the two first books the author wishes to show the necessity of geography; in the third he gives a description of Spain; in the fourth of Gaul and the British isles. The fifth and sixth contain an account of Italy and the neighbouring islands; the seventh, which is mutilated at the end, gives a full description of Germany, and the country of the Getæ, Illyricum, Taurica Chersonesus, and Epirus. The affairs of Greece and the adjacent islands are separately treated in the eighth, ninth, and tenth; and in the four next, Asia with mount Taurus, India, Persia, Syria, and Arabia; the last book gives an account of Egypt, Æthiopia, Carthage, and other places of Airica. Among the books of Strabo which have been lost, were historical commentaries. This celebrated geographer died A. D. 25 .- Lempriere.

she showed to Chelcias and Ananias, their friends and countrymen."

The success of Hyrcanus drew upon him the envy of the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, who retained no extraordinary esteem for him before. The authority of that faction was so sacred among the common people, that let them treat their king or their high-priest with the utmost indignity, the multitude would approve their proceedings.

Hyrcanus, however, having been trained up in that school, and looked upon as a person much in their favour, took occasion to invite them to an entertainment, where he treated them with all possible respect. As soon as their spirits were raised by good cheer he addressed them in the following manner: "I need not tell you, my worthy friends, that a man of your own principles desireth nothing more than to approve himself acceptable to God, and just to his neighbour, which is but according to your own doctrine; but if you shall find that I have in any thing departed from my duty, as it is your part to admonish and instruct me, I shall account it mine to amend and reform."

This candid address was received with such applause, that Hyrcanus did not a little value himself upon the reputation he acquired thereby. After a short pause, Eleazar, one of the guests, a malicious man, stood up, and thus addressed himself to Hyrcanus: "Since you are pleased to profess yourself a great lover of truth and plain dealing, be so just also as to lay down your pontificate, and content yourself with your civil administration."

When he was demanded the cause of this proposal, he replied, "Because we have been told by our elders, that in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes your mother was a slave." The report was false, and so much the more offensive, as well to the Pharisees as to Hyrcanus himself.

There happened to be in the company one Jonathan, Hyrcanus's particular friend, but a Sadducee, and consequently a mortal enemy to the Pharisees. He insisted that the calumny of Eleazar was concerted, and that the Pharisees were privy to it; adding, that the same would appear, if Hyrcanus would refer to them what punishment they thought a man might deserve for so scandalous a defamation.

Hyrcanus put the question, to try how they stood affected; and whether or not they were privy to the affront. Their answer was, (being men'generally inclined to mercy in such cases,) that they did not find defamation to be a capital crime, and therefore deemed whipping * and imprisonment might serve for satisfaction.

This method of compromising the affair put Hyrcanus into a violent passion, and gave him to understand, that they had every one of them part in this infamous reflection upon his family. Jonathan, in this heat, embittered him against the Pha-

^{*} Scourging was a very common punishment among the Jews. It was inflicted in two ways; with thongs or whips made of ropes or straps of leather; or with rods, twigs, or branches of some tree. The offender was stripped from his shoulders to his middle, and tied by his arms to a low pillar, that his back might be more fully exposed to the lash of the executioner, who stood behind him upon a stone, to have more power over him, and scourged him both on the back and breast, in open court, before the face of his judges. Among the Arabians, the prisoner is placed upright on the ground, with his hands and feet bound together, while the executioner stands before him, and with a short stick strikes him with a smart motion on the outside of his knees. The pain which these strokes produce is exquisitely severe, and which no constitution can support for any length of time. The Romans often inflicted the punishment of the scourge; the instruments employed were sticks or staves, rods, and whips or lashes. The first were almost peculiar to the camp; the last were reserved for slaves, while rods were applied to citizens, till they were removed by the Porcian law. This punishment, among the Jews, was not to exceed forty stripes, Deut. xxv. 3. and therefore the whip, wherewith it was inflicted, was made with three thongs, and, as each blow gave three stripes, they never inflicted upon any criminal more than thir-teen, because thirteen of these blows made thirtynine stripes, and to have added another blow, would have been a transgression of the law, by inflicting two stripes more than what was prescribed. Rather than do this therefore, the usual way was, to give one too few, and therefore St Paul tells us, 2 Cor. xi. 24. that, when he was whipped by the Jews, 'he received forty stripes, save one.'-Paxton and Prideaux.

risees to such a degree, that he absolutely renounced the sect, and went over to the Sadducees;* abrogating all their ordinances and constitutions, with a penalty upon those who should presume to observe them. This was it that put both himself and his sons quite out of credit with the common people, as will be seen hereafter.

The remainder of Hyrcanus's life, after the quelling this sedition, was spent happily. He continued to administer the affairs of justice in the best manner till his death, which happened in the year of his

government thirty-one.

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He left behind him five sons, and God was pleased to honour him with three eminent dignities;—the civil government of the Jews, the priesthood, and the spirit of prophecy, foretelling, by a divine revelation, that his two eldest sons should not long enjoy the government after the death of their father, and its succeeding in the event.+

* It is a mistake to think, that, because Hyrcanus is said to have left the Pharisees, and adjoined himself to the Sadducees, that therefore he espoused their doctrine against the resurrection and a future state. On the contrary, it seems highly probable, that, at this time, the Sadducees had gone no farther in the doctrine of their sect, than their rejecting all the unwritten traditions which the Pharisees held in so much veneration. Josephus mentions no other difference, in his time, between thenf; nor does he say, that Hyrcanus went over to the Sadducees in any other particular than in the abolishing the traditional constitutions of the Pharisees; and therefore we can hardly think that so good and righteous a man, as he is represented to have been, would, upon any provocation whatever, have been induced to renounce the great and fundamental articles of his religion; but it can be no diminution to his character, we hope, that he made it his business to oppose those false interpretations of the law, which our blessed Saviour, in the course of his ministry, so severely condemned .- Stackhouse.

† Josephus also relates, that when Antigonus and Aristobulus vanquished Antiochus Cyzicenus in battle, it was made known to Hyrcanus the very same moment in which the victory was gained though he was then at Jerusalem, at the distance of two days' journey from the field of battle. The Jews say it was revealed to him by a voice from heaven, which they call bath kol, that is, 'the daughter of a voice,' or 'the daughter-voice.' The oracular voice delivered from the mercy-seat, when God was there consulted by Urim and Thummim, was the grand and primary voice of revelation,—that of bath kol was of secondary dignity, and inferior

On Hyrcanus's decease, his eldest son Aristobulus formed a resolution of newmodelling the government, and changing the principality into an absolute monarchy,

to it, as the daughter is to the mother; and is therefore called 'the daughter-voice,' as succeeding in the other's stead. That it may be understood what kind of oracle this was, we shall give the following instance from the Talmud: "Rabbi Jochanan and Rabbi Simeon Ben Lachish, desiring to see the face of R. Samuel, a Babylonish doctor,—Let us follow, said they, the hearing of bath kol. Travelling, therefore, near a school, they heard the voice of a boy reading these words out of the first book of Samuel, 'and Samuel died;' on observing this, they inferred that their friend Samuel was dead; and so they found it had happened, for Samuel of Babylon was then dead." Many simi-lar instances might be adduced from the Jewish writings, but this is sufficient to show that their bath kol was no such voice from heaven as they pretend, but only a fantastical way of divination of their own invention, like the Sortes Virgilianse among the heathen;—for as with them the words first dipped at in the book of that poet, was the oracle whereby they prognosticated those future events which they desired to be informed of, so with the Jews, when they appealed to 'the daughter-voice,' the next words which they should hear from any one's mouth were the same; and this they called a voice from heaven, because thereby they thought the judgment of heaven to be declared on any dubious point which they desired to be informed of. The Christians, when Christianity first began to be corrupted, learned from the heathen the like way of divination, and much practised it, only substituting the scriptures for the poems of Virgil. This was as ancient as the time of Austin in the fourth century, and it was practised by Heraclius, emperor of the East in the seventh. for, being engaged in war against Cosrhoes, king of Persia, after a successful campaign, he consulted the scriptures in this way of divination, to know where to fix his winter quarters. But it obtained most in the West, especially in France, where, for several ages, it was the practice, on the consecration of a new bishop, to consult the bible concerning him by this way of divination, and, from the words which they should first dip at in the opening of the book, make a judgment of his life, manners, and future behaviour. The Normans, on their conquest of England, brought this usage hither with them. On the consecration of Wil-liam, the second Norman bishop of the diocese of Norwich, the words which first opened at for him were, 'Not this man, but Barabbas;' by which they made a judgment, that this bishop was not long to continue, and that a thief should come in his place; and so it accordingly happened. For, William dying soon after, Herbertus de Losinga, another Norman, was made his successor, who was chief simony broker to king William Rufus, (that king openly selling all ecclesiastical benefices,) and had simoniacally obtained of him the abbey of Winchester for his father, and the abbey of Ramsay for himself, and had now by the like means, gained this bishopric. At his consecration, the words

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own head.- This happened four hundred and eighty one years and three months after the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon.

He had so great a regard for Antigonus, his next brother, that he associated him as a kind of partner with him in the government. The other three he kept in prison, together with his mother, whom he looked upon as a rival, upon a pretence that his father had left her at his death in possession of all he could confer upon her. horrid and unnatural was his cruelty, that he starved his mother to death, and afterward put his beloved brother to death, only upon wicked suggestions of malicious tongues.

These suggestions had no effect upon him at first, through the prevalence of his affection for Antigonus, and a persuasion that they were the dictates of malice and envy; but happening to return from the army, on a certain occasion, in great pomp, just upon the solemnity of the feast of tabernacles, Aristobulus at the same time lying sick, his brother went up to the temple, with his guards about him, in great splendour, upon the business of religious worship, in order to offer up his prayers and vows for the health of his brother.

The fame of Antigonus and the magnificence of his retinue, furnished matter for a faction of sycophants and court parasites to work upon; so they went immediately to the king, with the most virulent calumnies, saying, "This was not a behaviour that became the condition of a private man, but rather an evidence of a design upon the crown; intimating that the guards he had then about him would in a short time proceed, from this invasion upon his

which the Bible opened at for him, were the same which Christ spoke to Judas when he came to betray him: 'Friend, wherefore art thou come?' These and the former words for his predecessor, alarmed his conscience, and brought him to a thorough repentance for his crimes; and as a fruit of his repentance he built the cathedral church of Norwich, of which he laid the first stone in the year of our Lord 1098 .- Prideaux.

setting the crown accordingly upon his royalty, to a violence upon his person; nor would he be so impolitic as to stop at part of the government, when he might obtain the whole."

> Aristobulus was so divided between the fear of being too secure, or too credulous, that though he could not believe every thing they told him, yet at the same time, suspected that it was founded on some just ground; and therefore resolved to provide for his safety, without giving any proof of jealousy.

> In his apartment in a tower, since known by the name of Antonia,* he posted a

^{*} This tower was originally called Baris, which among the Eastern nations signified a palace or royal castle; and here the Asmonean princes took up their abode, and made it their royal palace as long as they reigned there. It was built by John Hyrcanus on the mountain of the temple, and situated on its north and west angle. Herod the Great, when he ascended the throne, rebuilt, enlarged, and beautified it, and gave it the name of Antonia, in honour of his friend Mark Antony the triumvir, who then governed the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. It was built on a rock seventy-five feet high, cased all over with polished marble, so that it was rendered on all sides inaccessible except towards the temple. The form of the building was that of a quadrangle, and contained many apartments, bagnios, and halls, all suitable to the magnificence of a palace. A turret was erected at each of the four corners, at such an elevation as to command a view of the temple courts, so that should any tumult arise in any part of the temple, it might from thence be observed, and soldiers sent down to quell it. And from hence it was that the tribune ran with his soldiers to res-cue Paul out of the hands of the Jews, who had seized him in the temple, and designed to kill him. The Asmoneans having always kept the pontifical robes in this fortress, here Herod, on his first coming to the crown, found them, and here he continued still to keep them in the same place, and so did Archelaus his successor, and the Romans after him, all upon an opinion, that their having these robes in their possession would be a means for the better keeping of the Jews in awe. The custom was, to lay them up in a cabinet made on purpose for it, under the seal of the high-priest and the treasurer of the temple; and when they needed them for the sacred solemnities on which they were used, they exhibited their seals to the captain of the castle, and then had the robes delivered to them; and when the solemnities were over, they were then again laid up under the same seals in the same place; and thus it continued to be done, till at length the temple, this fortress, and the robes in it were all destroyed in the deflagration and total destruction of the city of Jerusalem by Titus and his Romans.—See Universal History, and Prideaux' Connection

guard in a dark place under-ground, with particular orders that they should watch his brother in this passage, and that if he came without arms, he should pass unmolested; but if he came armed they should kill him.

Aristobulus then sent for his brother to come to him, charging the messenger to bid him come unarmed; but the queen, and the rest of the conspirators, tampered with the messenger, and bade him tell Antigonus on the contrary, that his brother had heard of a very elegant suit of armour he had, and that he was desirous of seeing how it became him. As he depended upon the good faith of his brother, and suspected no treachery, he went immediately armed, just as the messenger desired him. Upon his coming to the tower of Straton, the soldiers fell upon him in a dark passage and slew him.

This disaster may suffice to show the force of envy and slander; and how the very best dispositions may be corrupted by those temptations.

But the most extraordinary circumstance was the prediction of one Judas, a famous prophet of those times. This Judas, upon the sight of Antigonus, coming to the temple, broke out into exclamations among his disciples, that he was now weary of his life; for that Antigonus, whose death he had presaged upon that very day at Straton's tower was yet alive; the place six hundred furlongs off, and the day more than half spent; so that he had utterly lost the credit of a prophet for ever. While he was in this perplexity the news arrived of Antigonus's being slain in a subterranean passage under the tower.*

The conscious guilt of being accessary to his brother's death, inflamed his distemper to that degree, that it brought on a vomiting of blood; and as one of his servants was carrying part of it away in a bason, he stumbled upon the way, and spilt it upon the very blood of his master's brother.

This accident caused such an outcry, that Aristobulus overhearing it, could not rest till they told him the meaning of it; and the more unwilling they were of owning the truth, the more eager was he to know it, as men are naturally more curious in such cases. At length, through importunity and menace, he extorted it from them, and in the horrors of conscience thus expostulated with groans and tears: "The all-seeing eye of God hath found me out in my wickedness, and my brother's blood hath already brought down a vengeance upon me. How long shall this shameless carcase maintain a life so justly forfeited to the ashes of my dear mother and brother! Why do I not rather die once for all, than bleed to death thus drop by drop, as if my sufferings could be an atonement for the guilt of parricide!" He had no sooner uttered these words than he gave up the ghost, having governed only one year, under the surname Philellen; that is to say, a lover of the Greeks.

He gained many advantages to his country; made war upon Iturea, and joined a considerable part of it to the territory of Judea, forcing the people upon pain of banishment, to submit to circumcision, and live in a conformity to the other rites and practices of the Jews.

He was accounted otherwise a person of modesty and justice, as Strabo vouches for him in these words: "He was a righteous man, and in many respects a friend to the Jews; for he enlarged their jurisdiction by annexing to it Iturea, uniting the people also into one common bond of circumcision."

^{*} This was called Straton's tower, as well as that upon the coast, which was afterwards known by the name of Cæsarea; and this set the prophet right again.

[†] The country of Iturea bordered upon the north-eastern part of the land of Israel. It was called Iturea from Itur, one of the sons of Ishmael, who in our English version is wrongly called Jetur. This country is the same which is sometimes called Auronitis. As Idumea lay at one end of the land of Israel, so Iturea lay at the other.

CHAPTER VII.

Salome releases the brothers imprisoned by Aristobulus, and places the elder upon the throne; who puts one of his brothers to death.

—Divers contests between Alexander and Ptolemy with various success.—Cleopatra espouses the cause of the Jews, with great success, and after the death of Ptolemy enters into alliance with Alexander.—Horrid massacre by the Jews.—Alexander, after various fortunes, fulls in an ambush.—A rebellion ensues that proved very fatal to the Jews.

AFTER the death of Aristobulus, his wife Salome, by the Greeks called Alexandra, set his brothers at liberty whom her husband had made prisoners, and placed Jannæus, otherwise called Alexander, upon the throne; the eldest, and the most moderate of the three.

Alexander, therefore, upon the death of Aristobulus, entered upon the administration; and taking off one of his brothers that would have supplanted him, provided for the other in the humble state of a private life.

As soon as he had settled the state, he marched with his army to Ptolemais, where he encountered a body of the enemy in the field; beat them into the town, and then shut them up in it. There was only this place and Gaza, of all the seacoast towns that stood out, besides Dora, and the tower of Straton, in the hands of Zoilus.

As Antiochus Philometor, and his brother Antiochus Cyzicenus, were engaged in a war one with another, there was no hope of any relief to the people of Ptolemais from them.

The besieged, in fine, had no prospect of relief, but from Egypt, and especially from Ptolemy Lathyrus,* who had been

* This Ptolemy, surnamed Lathyrus, from an excrescence like a pea on the nose, by his mother Cleopatra was made king of Egypt, but by his affecting to reign without her, he so far incurred her displeasure, that she procured his expulsion by this artifice. Some of her favourite eunuchs she caused to be wounded: and then bringing them out into the public assembly of the Alexan.

driven out of his kingdom by his mother Cleopatra, and was now withdrawn into Cyprus: so that they sent ambassadors to Ptolemy to desire his aid against Alexander; not doubting, but that as soon as he should set foot in Syria, the people of Gaza and Ptolemais would all declare in his favour; beside that, Zoilus, the Sidonians, and other people in those parts would certainly join him.

The king was so elevated with these assurances, that he set his people immediately upon equipping of a fleet for the expedition; but while they were thus employed, one Demenetus, a person of great credit with the citizens of Ptolemais, brought the people to a better understanding of the matter, by reasoning with them about it after this manner: "The important point is this, whether you had not

drians, she there pretended, that they had suffered this from Lathyrus, in defence of her person against him, and thereupon accused him of having made an attempt upon her life; and by this means she so far incensed the people, that they rose in a general uproar against him, and would have torn him in pieces, had he not fled for his life. Lathyrus, banished from Egypt, became king of Cyprus, and soon after he appeared at the head of a large army to make war against Alex-ander Jannæus, king of Judæa, through whose assistance and intrigue he had been expelled by Cleopatra. The Jewish monarch was conquered, and 50,000 of his men were left on the field of battle. Lathyrus, after he had exercised the greatest cruelty upon the Jews, and made vain attempts to recover the kingdom of Egypt, retired to Cyprus till the death of his brother Alexander restored him to his native dominions. Some of the cities of Egypt refused to acknowledge him as their sovereign, and Thebes, for its obstinacy, was closely besieged for three successive years, and from a powerful and populous city it was reduced to ruins. In the latter part of his reign Lathyrus was called upon to assist the Romans with a navy for the conquest of Athens, but Lucullus, who had been sent to obtain the wanted supply, though received with kingly honours, was dismissed with evasive and unsatisfactory answers, and the mon-arch refused to part with troops which he deemed necessary to preserve the peace of his kingdom. Lathyrus died 81 years before the Christian era, after a reign of thirty-six years since the death of his father Physcon, eleven of which he had passed with his mother Cleopatra on the Egyptian throne, eighteen in Cyprus, and seven after his mother's death. He was succeeded by his only daughter Cleopatra, whom Alexander, the son of Ptolemy Alexander, by means of the dictator Sylla, soon after married and murdered .- Justin and Prideaux.

better stand to the fate of the war you are engaged in with the Jews, and venture the uncertain issue of it, than by calling in and delivering yourselves up to the protection of a foreign power, incur a certain slavery; and not only become involved in a present broil, but run the risk of a more dangerous incumbrance that threatens you from Egypt; for you cannot think that Cleopatra will remain inactive and see Ptolemy form his troops; the queen will rather get beforehand with him, and have a potent army at his back before he is ready for it; besides the hazard he runs of being driven out of Besides, if Ptolemy should fail in his design, and be forced back to Cyprus, you will be exposed to the greatest dangers and difficulties."

This remonstrance dissuaded them from their design of the embassy, and Ptolemy was informed of the same upon his passage; however, since he was in motion, he continued his course to Sycamin, where he landed an army of about thirty thousand horse and foot, marching thence to Ptolemais, with an intent to send an embassy to the city; but when he found that they would neither regard his message, nor personal application, it greatly perplexed him, and while he was involved in this dilemma, Zoilus and some deputies from Gaza arrived to implore his assistance against the Jews and Alexander, that were making havoe in their country.

Alexander, upon this, was forced to raise the siege: and when he found that nothing was to be effected by force, he had recourse to stratagem. He privately treated with Cleopatra against Ptolemy, and at the same time kept fair with Ptolemy, under the countenance of a friend and an ally; proposing to give him four hundred talents of silver upon condition of delivering up the usurper Zoilus into his hands, and restoring to the Jews their lands which he had in possession.

Ptolemy without hesitation embraced the friendship of Alexander, and seized

upon Zoilus; but being informed that there was an intrigue carried on between Alexander and Cleopatra, he looked upon the league as violated, and laid siege to Ptolemais, where the gates were shut against him. Upon this he divided his army, leaving one part of it before the town to carry on the siege, and marching off with the remainder of it himself, to lay waste the country of Judea.

Alexander, on the other hand, to frustrate this design of Ptolemy, levied a formidable army of his own people; and advanced with it against the enemy. Ptolemy, in the mean time, taking the advantage of a sabbath day, fell upon Asochis, a city of Galilee, and took it by assault with about ten thousand prisoners, and a vast booty.

After the taking of Asochis, Ptolemy attacked Sepphoris, an adjacent place, where he was repulsed with a considerable loss, and from thence marched directly to hazard an engagement with Alexander, whom he found near the river Jordan, and encamped over against the enemy. Alexander had in his van eight thousand of those they call Hacatontomachi, armed with brazen bucklers, and Ptolemy's men in the front had the same sort of shields: but the generality of his people not being so well armed as their adversaries, were not very desirous of engaging till one Philostephanus, a gallant and experienced officer who had the conduct of them, led them on and encouraged them to sustain the encounter. The first word of command was to pass the river that parted the two armies; which Alexander did not oppose, in confidence of obtaining the victory, if he could but engage the enemy with the river behind them to cut off their retreat. When it came to the point, the fortune of the battle was doubtful, and it was maintained with great loss on both sides: for some time, one of Ptolemy's divisions giving way, the victory seemed to incline to Alexander; but Philostephanus coming up to their relief

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with a seasonable reinforcement, that wing of the Jews was overpowered by numbers, and broken; and no succour appearing, they were forced to fly, and the whole field followed their example; Ptolemy's men pursuing them with great slaughter.

According to some historians, Alexander lost in this battle and pursuit no less

than fifty thousand men.

After this bloody victory, Ptolemy, in the evening, went into some of the Jews' villages and habitations, and finding them crowded with women and children, ordered his soldiers to put them to the sword promiscuously, and hew them into quarters, and boil them, as a terror to those that escaped from the battle, when they should find themselves fallen into the hands of an enemy that lived upon human flesh.

Cleopatra, alarmed at the growing power of her son Lathyrus, who had reduced Gaza, and laid waste the land of Judea, thought it necessary to curb his ambition, especially as he was come to the gates of Egypt with a design upon the kingdom. Therefore she mustered, without delay, her utmost force, naval and military, constituting Chelcias and Ananias, two Jews, generals.

She sent the greatest part of her treasure, with her grand-children, and her last will and testament into the isle of Cos;* and ordered her son Alexander with a powerful army into Phœnice, to keep that province in obedience, while she herself went to Ptolemais; and being refused admittance, ordered an assault to be made upon the town. Ptolemy, upon this quitted Syria, and hastened away into Egypt, flattering himself that his unexpected arrival in the queen's absence would tend to his success; but Cleopatra

was prepared for him, though she had the misfortune at this time to lose Chelcias, one of her generals, as he was in the pursuit of Ptolemy in Cœlo-syria.

Upon Ptolemy's miscarriage in this attempt upon Egypt, the queen sent a strong detachment after him, that drove him quite out of his country a second time, and forced him to take up his winter-quarters in Gaza. She herself, in the mean time, taking the city and garrison of Ptolemais by assault, where complimentary honours mutually passed between the queen and Alexander, and Cleopatra was particularly saluted for her generous assistance of an unfortunate prince under the persecution and oppression of a common enemy.

Some of the queen's friends persuaded her to pursue different measures, suggesting to her the expediency of availing herself of this opportunity to seize Alexander, as it was highly impolitic to leave such a number of Jews under the command of one man. But Ananias loudly exclaimed against the unreasonableness of such a proceeding, as highly injurious to all the ties of hospitality and common faith, especially to a friend and kinsman, under so sacred a trust; alleging, moreover, that one such act of injustice would turn against her the hearts of all honest Jews upon the face of the earth. The queen was so pleased with the honest simplicity of Ananias, that she did not only treat Alexander with lenity, but renewed a league of friendship with him at Scythopolis, a city of Coelo-syria.

No sooner was Alexander delivered from the power of Ptolemy, than he undertook an expedition into Cœlo-syria; where, after a siege of ten months, he took Gadara, and after that, Amathus, a strong fort upon the river Jordan, and the place where Theodorus the son of Zeno, in an outrage of revenge, fell upon the Jews by surprise, cut off ten thousand of their men, and took Alexander's baggage: but this unexpected disaster did

^{*} This isle or city is not that remote island in the Ægean sea, famous for the birth of the great Hippocrates, but a city or island of the same name adjoining to Egypt, mentioned both by Stephanus and Ptolemy, as Dr Hudson informs us.

not divert the king from his design upon Lysimachus, his own brother, from an Raphia, a sea-coast town, and Anthedon, which was afterwards by Herod called Agrippias; both which he reduced by force.

Ptolemy had by this time left Gaza, and betaken himself into Cyprus,* his mother Cleopatra also being returned to Egypt, so that Alexander took this occasion of revenging himself upon the people of Gaza for calling in Ptolemy to their succour against him; laid siege to the town, and at the same time ravaged their country.

While Alexander was before Gaza, Apollodotus their commander made a resolute sally in the night with two thousand mercenaries, and ten thousand of the citizens well armed, upon the camp of the Jews; and as long as it was dark the besieged had success, upon an apprehension of Ptolemy's being come up with relief; but no sooner did the day break than the Jews rallied, and so furiously charged the garrison, that they destroyed a thousand of their men; but the courage of these people was proof still against all the difficulties of number, force, nay, famine itself; being resolved rather to abide all extremities, than shrink, or yield to an enemy.

And as a further encouragement, they were animated by Aretas, an Arabian king, with the promise of a timely succour. But all this availed nothing, for before any supply could be brought, Apollodotus was killed, and the town taken. This Apollodotus was murdered by ignoble motive of envy for the reputation he had gained among the people.

After the fact, he assembled a party, and delivered up the city to Alexander. This prince, upon his first entrance, behaved himself with moderation; but this disposition did not long prevail, for soon after he permitted his soldiers to kill, burn, and destroy at pleasure. This license they extended into an absolute massacre, though it cost them dear enough; for there died as many of the Jews as of the townsmen.

Some, to anticipate the fury of the enemy, set fire to their own houses, others laid violent hands upon their very wives and children, choosing rather to have them die free, than live slaves.

The magistracy happened to be in council when these barbarous troops came into the city, and the senators, to the number of five hundred, fled immediately to the temple of Apollo for sanctuary; but they were all slaughtered to a man, the town sacked and levelled; and Alexander, after a year spent before it, returned to Jerusalem.

While Antiochus Cyzicenus was in possession of the government of Syria, there was another Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, who made war upon him, wherein he lost his life and his army; after which his brother Philip took the crown to himself, and governed part of Syria. Ptolemy Lathyrus upon this sent for his fourth brother Demetrius Eucerus, to Cnidus, whom he constituted king of Damascus. Antiochus, for the time he lived, made a stout resistance against his brothers; but being called soon after to the assistance of Laodice, the queen of the Gileadites, who was then in war with the Parthians, he was slain in the field with his sword in his hand, behaving himself like a man of honour and resolution; and after his death the government of Syria descended to his two brothers, Philip and Demetrius.

^{*} An island of the Mediterranean sea, situated between Cilicia and Syria. It extends in length from east to west about two hundred miles, and about sixty in breadth. The ancients were of opinion that it took its name from the cypress tree, which there grows in great abundance. It was formerly much celebrated for its fertility: but not less so for its luxury and the obscene practices of its inhabitants. It gave the name of Cypris or Cypria to Venus, who, in the times of heathenish darkness, here bore sovereign sway, and was worshipped as their favourite goddess. Women were shipped as their favourite goddess. consecrated to her service, and by law compelled to prostitute themselves to strangers .- Jones.

cost the Jews no less than fifty thousand lives.

The king was weary of the war, sought for a reconciliation, but could not effect it: and such was the aversion of the people to his government, that when he required of them what he should do to appease them, they unanimously desired him to cut his own throat; and thereupon invited Demetrius Eucerus to their aid.

CHAPTER VIII.

Various contests between Demetrius and Alexander .- Horrible instance of cruelty in the latter .- Death of Demetrius and Alexander. -Lamentation of his queen.-State of Judea under her government .- Sect of the Pharisees rule in her name .- Divers transactions between Alexandra and other persons .- Aristobulus, her son, endeavours to supplant her .-Her death and character.

DEMETRIUS EUCERUS, in conjunction with those who invited him, marched to their assistance with an army of three thousand horse, and forty thousand foot, and encamped near Shechem, where Alexander, with about six thousand and two hundred foreign mercenaries, and twenty thousand of his own faction, went out to meet him.

The armies being drawn up, a bloody battle ensued, in which Demetrius obtained the victory, so that Alexander was forced to fly to the mountains for refuge; where, by a strange turn of compassion for his misfortune, six thousand Jews came up and joined him.

Demetrius, alarmed at this sudden reinforcement, withdrew his army and retired; but the Jews maintained , their ground, and carried on the war against Alexander, by dint of their own resolution and credit; notwithstanding they were perpetually , baffled and cut to pieces whenever they engaged.

They were compelled at length with he best of their men to betake themselves to Bethome for protection, where Alex-

About this time there broke out a re- ander shut them up; and, taking the bellion, which continued six years, and town, carried the people prisoners to Jerusalem, where he committed the most execrable barbarities.

> As he was feasting with his concubines, in a turret that commanded a large prospect, he made it part of his entertainment to treat his company with the spectacle of crucifying eight hundred Jews, and ordering their wives and children to be slain before their eyes.

> This barbarity rendered Alexander so detestable, that the Jews gave him the appellation of Thracidas.* There were about eight thousand of the army that escaped by night, and spent their days afterward in a kind of banishment, during his life.

> Demetrius having advanced to Berea, and laid siege to that place, was so powerfully opposed, that he was compelled to surrender, and afterward sent to Mithridates, the king of Parthia, who treated him with great respect, till the time of his death, which happened shortly after his late defeat.

> Alexander addicted himself toward the end of his reign to intemperance and debauchery of every kind, which brought on a quartan ague that continued three years; but at the same time he attended to the offices of state, insomuch that through the pressure of his disorder, and the fatigue of government, he expired at the close of that term, upon the frontiers of the Gerasens, at the siege of the castle of Ragaba, on the farther side of the river Jordan.

> When queen Alexandra found him reduced to the last extremity, she lamented the fate of herself and children in terms to this effect: "Alas! my dear lord,

^{*} This name Thracidas, which the Jews gave Alexander, must, by the coherence, denote as barbarous as a Thracian, or something like it; because the Thracians were remarkably cruel and barbarous in their natural dispositions, as appears from Thucydides and other historians. They were addicted to drinking and venereal pleasures, and they sacrificed without the smallest humanity their enemies on the altars of their gods.

what will become of your wife and children, without one friend in the world, and left exposed to your mortal enemies." Alexander, in consequence of this lamentation, thus advised her: "If you would be safe and happy when I am dead, and quietly succeed to the government, follow my counsel. In the first place, keep my death concealed from the soldiers till the castle is taken, and then triumphantly go to Jerusalem with the news of it. Make your court to the Pharisees; for your character will rise or fall, according to their opinion of you. I speak this by experience; for it has been my moroseness toward this sect, that has turned the hearts of the whole nation against me. Therefore when you come to Jerusalem, send for some of the leading men of that sect, and lay before them, that out of the reverence you have for their generosity, piety, and justice, you do now deliver up the body to be disposed of as to their wisdom shall seem meet; assuring them that you shall ever resign yourself to their authority, not only in this, but in all other matters of a public nature. Follow these measures, and depend upon it there will be a care taken for an honourable and magnificent funeral, and for the settling of yourself and children in the exercise of your lawful power. Let them have the rule over you, and it will be their concern to establish you in a peaceable rule over others."*

As soon as he had given this advice to his wife he expired, in the nine and fortieth year of his age, and the twentyseventh of his reign.

As soon as the castle of Ragaba was taken, Alexandra applied herself to the Pharisees, according to her husband's directions, leaving the body, and the concerns of the government, to their disposal. By this means the Pharisees, who before had been her greatest enemies, became her greatest friends; haranguing the people on the glorious exploits of Alexander, the irreparable loss of so just a prince; and by these rhetorical strokes raised the passions of the multitude to such a pitch of sorrow, that they thought him worthy of a funeral solemnity beyond his predecessors.

So great was the power and influence of the Pharisees, that the queen might be said merely to execute their orders. She appointed the revival of the Pharisaical ordinances and traditions, which her father-in-law Hyrcanus had abolished; and every thing was transacted in the queen's name by their power.

In some few cases, indeed, she acted by her own proper authority; for instance, she kept a mercenary army in pay, and augmented her forces to such a degree, that the kings, her neighbours, stood in awe of her, as appeared by the security they gave her as hostages for their good behaviour. Her reign would have been quiet and easy, had she not frequently been embroiled at the instigation of this turbulent sect, when they pressed her for justice upon those that advised the death

^{*} It seems by this dying advice of Alexander Jannæus to his wife, that he had himself pursued the measures of his father Hyrcanus, and taken part with the Sadducees, who kept close to the written law against the Pharisees, who had introduced their own traditions; and that he now saw a political necessity of submitting to the Pharisees and their traditions hereafter, if his widow and family minded to retain their monarchical government or tyranny over the Jewish nation: which sect yet, thus supported, were at last in a great measure the ruin of the religion, government, and nation of the Jews, and brought them into so wicked a state, that the vengeance of God came upon them to their utter excision. Just thus did Caiaphas politically advise the Jewish sanhedrim, John xi. 50, 'that it was expedient for them that one man should die for the people, and that

the whole nation perish not: and this, in consequence of their own political supposal ver. 48, that, 'If they let Jesus alone,' with his miracles, 'all men would believe on him; and the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation;' which political crucifixion of Jesus ot Nazareth brought down the vengeance of God upon them, and occasioned those very Romans, of whom they seemed so much afraid, that to prevent it they put him to death, actually to 'come and take away both their place and nation,' within thirty-eight years afterwards.— Whiston.

of the eight hundred persons that were cruelly massacred.

She was so wrought upon by their remonstrances and expostulations, that she put the malcontents in possession of strongholds and garrisons, upon condition that Hyrcania, Alexandrium, and Macherus, where she deposited her jewels, treasure, and rich goods, might be freed from their jurisdiction.

She sent her son Aristobulus with an army toward Damascus against Ptolemy, who was called Menneus; but he returned soon after from that expedition, without doing any thing of moment.

While things were in this posture a report arrived that Tigranes,* king of Armenia, was advanced into Syria, with an army of five hundred thousand men, with a design to march suddenly into Judea.

Alexandra was so alarmed at this intelligence, that she sent ambassadors with presents to Tigranes, who was at that time before Ptolemais.

The queen Selene, to otherwise called

* This Armenian king married Cleopatra, the daughter of Mithridates, and it was by the advice of his father-in-law that he declared war against the Romans. He assumed to himself the title of king of kings; and to make his claim to it the better appear, having taken several petty prisoners in his wars with them, he made them wait on him as his domestic servants. He never went abroad but he had four of them to attend him; two running by him on one side of his horse, and two on the other; and thus, in like manner, he was served by some of them at his table, in his bedchamber, and on all other occasions, but more especially when he gave audience to ambassadors; for then, to make the greater ostentation of his glory to foreign nations, he made all these captive kings in the posture and habit of servants, to range themselves on each side of him. He despised the Romans when at a distance, and even ordered the head of the messenger to be cut off who first told him that the Roman general was boldly advancing towards his capital. But as proud as he was, when once he came to feel the power of the Roman arms, he was soon brought into such a state of mean and abject humiliation, that when he appeared before Pompey, he plucked his crown, or royal tiara from off his head, and cast himself prostrate on the ground before him .- Plutarch.

† She was daughter of Physcon, king of Egypt, and had first married her brother Lathyrus, according to the custom of her country, and afterwards, by desire of her mother, her other brother Grypus. At the death of Grypus, she became

Cleopatra, who then held the government of Syria, animated her subjects to stand upon their guard, and oppose Triganes's entrance into the country.

The ambassadors acquitted themselves so well toward the king on the behalf of Alexandra, and the whole nation of the Jews, that with great instances of respect to the embassy, he gave them assurance of all good offices in return. In short, he took Ptolemais, and was no sooner master of it, than word was brought him of the rout of Mithridates by Lucullus, ‡ the

the wife of Antiochus, king of Syria. She was put to death by Tigranes, the Armenian king.

† Mithridates, the king of Pontus, lay at this time encamped in the plains of Cabiræ. gained the advantage in two actions fought with Lucullus the Roman general, but was entirely defeated in the third, and obliged to fly, without either servant or equery to attend him, or a single horse of his stable. It was not till after some time, that one of his eunuchs, seeing him on foot in the midst of the flying crowd, got off his horse and gave it him. The Romans were so near him, that they almost had him in their hands; and it was owing entirely to themselves that they did not take him. 'The avarice alone of the soldiers lost them a prey which they had pursued so long, through so many toils, dangers, and battles, and deprived Lucullus of the sole reward of all his victories. Mithridates, says Cicero, artfully imitated the manner in which Medea, in the same kingdom of Pontus, formerly escaped the pursuit of her father. That princess is said to have cut in pieces the body of Absyrtus her brother, and to have scattered his limbs in the places through which her father pursued her; in order that his care in taking up those dispersed members, and the grief so sad a spectacle would give him, might stop the rapidity of his pursuit. Mithridates, in like manner as he fled, left upon the way a great quantity of gold, silver, and precious effects, which had either descended to him from his ancestors, or had been amassed by himself in preceding wars: and whilst the soldiers employed themselves in gathering those treasures, the king escaped their hands. So that the father of Medea was stopped in his pursuit by sorrow, but the Romans by joy. After this defeat of the enemy, Lucullus took the city of Cabiræ with several other places and castles, in which he found great riches. He found also the prisons full of Greeks and princes nearly related to the king, who were confined in them. As those unhappy persons had long given themselves over for dead, the liberty they received from Lucullus seemed less a deliverance than a new life to them. In one of those castles, a sister of the king's, named Nyssa, was also taken, which was to her a great instance of good fortune. For the other sisters of that prince, with his wives, who had been sent farther from the danger, and who believed themselves in safety and repose, all died miserably,

when Lucullus saw he could not overtake him, he struck off into Armenia, where he was at that time ravaging the country.

escape upon pursuit into Iberia; and that | Upon this intelligence, Tigranes immediately marched off with his army, and returned home,

The queen Alexandra, some time afte

Mithridates on his flight having sent them orders to die by Bacchidas the eunuch. other sisters of the king were Roxana and Statira, both unmarried, and about forty years of age, with two of his wives, Berenice and Monima, both of Iona. All Greece spoke much of the latter, whom they admired more for her prudence The king than her beauty, though exquisite. having fallen desperately in love with her, had forgotten nothing that might incline her to favour his passion: he sent her at once 15,000 pieces of gold. She was always averse to him, and refused his presents, till he gave her the quality of wife and queen, and sent her the royal tiara, or diadem, an essential ceremony in the marriage of the kings of those nations. Nor did she then comply without extreme regret, and in compliance with the wishes of her family, who were dazzled with the splendour of a crown and the power of Mithridates, who was at that time victorious, and at the height of his glory. From the time of her marriage to the instant of which we are now speaking, that unfortunate princess had passed her life in continual sadness and affliction, lamenting her fatal beat ty, which instead of a husband had given her a master, and instead of procuring her an honourable abode and the endearments of conjugal society, had confined her in a close prison, under a guard of barbarians; where, far removed from the delightful regions of Greece, she had only enjoyed a dream of the happiness with which she had been flattered, and had really lost that solid and essential good she possessed in her own beloved country. When Bacchidas arrived, and had signified to the princesses the order of Mithridates, which favoured them no farther than to leave them at liberty to choose the kind of death they should think most gentle and immediate, Monima, taking the diadem from her head, tied it round her neck, and hung herself up by it. But that wreath not being strong enough, and breaking, she cried out, "Ah, fatal trifle, you might at least do me this mournful office!" Then, throwing it away with indignation, she presented her throat to Bacchidas. As for Berenice, she took a cup of poison; and as she was going to drink it, her mother, who was present, desired to share it with her. They accordingly drank both together. The half of that poison sufficed to carry off the mother, worn out and feeble with age; but was not enough to surmount the strength and youth of Berenice. That princess struggled long with death in the most violent agonies, till Bacchidas, tired with waiting the effects of the poison, ordered her to be strangled.

The beginning of the reign of Mithridates was marked by ambition, cruelty, and avarice. murdered his own mother, who had been left by his father coheiress of the kingdom, and likewise put to death the two sons whom his sister Laodice had born to Ariarathes, king of Cappadocia; and placed one of his children, only eight years old,

on the vacant throne. The Romans, indignant at the artifice and cruelty employed by Mithridates in usurping the Cappadocian kingdom, soon stripped him of it,—which sowed the first seeds of enmity between the king of Pontus and the Romans. Three Roman officers, L. Cassius, M. Aquilius, and Q. Oppius, were sent to oppose him with the troops of Bithynia, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, and Gallo-græcia. The army of these provinces, together with the Roman soldiers in Asia, amounted to 70,000 men and 6000 horse. The forces of the king of Pontus were greatly superior to these; he led 250,000 foot, 49,000 horse, and 130 armed chariots into the field of battle, under the command of Neoptolemus and Archelaus. In an engagement, the king of Pontus gained the victory, and dispersed the Roman forces in Asia. Two of the Roman generals were taken, and M. Aquilius, who was the principal cause of the war, was carried about in Asia, and exposed to the ridicule and insults of the populace, and at last put to death by Mithridates, who ordered melted gold to be poured down his throat, as a slur upon the avidity of the Romans. He never lost an opportunity by which he might lessen the influence of his adversaries; and the more effectually to destroy their power in Asia he ordered all the Romans that were in his dominions to be massacred. This was done in one night; and no less than 150,000, according to Plutarch, or 80,000 Romans, as Appian mentions, were made the victims of his cruelty. This universal massacre called aloud for revenge; and he successively waged war during many years against the most powerful people on earth, led to the field by a Sylla, a Lucullus, and a Pompey. In the last battle fought with Pompey a universal overthrow ensued, and Mithridates, bold in his misfortunes, rushed through the thick ranks of the enemy at the head of 800 horsemen, 500 of which perished in the attempt to follow him. He fled to Tigranes, but that monarch refused an asylum to his father-in-law, whom he had before supported with all the collected forces of his kingdom. Mithridates found a safe retreat among the Scythians, and though destitute of power, friends, and resources, yet he meditated the destruction of the Roman empire, by penetrating into the heart of Italy by land. These wild projects were rejected by his subjects, and they, fearful to accompany him in a march of above 2000 miles across a barren and uncultivated country, revolted, and made his son Pharnaces king. The son showed himself ungrateful to his father, and even, according to some writers, ordered him to be put to death. Seeing himself abandoned by all the world, he retired to his apartment, and, after having given poison to such of his wives, concubines, and daughters as were with him at the time, he took the same himself; but when he perceived that it had not its effect upon him, he had recourse to the sword. The wound not this, fell dangerously sick, which gave Aristobulus a fair opportunity of accomplishing his design, so that, slipping out in the night, attended only by one servant, he arrived privately at the forts and castles where his father's friends were in garrison. He had been a long time dissatisfied with his mother's government; but considering her present indisposition, and the danger of the whole family's lying at the mercy of the Pharisees, in case of her death, (Hyrcanus, the next in succession, being utterly unqualified for the exercise of any public charge,) he found himself extremely embarrassed under these circumstances. No person being privy to his design, but his own wife, whom he left at Jerusalem with his children, he went to Agada, where he was very generously entertained by Galestes, a person of eminence.

Alexandra missed him the very day after his departure, but did not suspect his intent till she came to understand by one messenger after another, of the surrender of divers fortresses to him. This turn of affairs put the queen and the people into great confusion, who, in order to prevent his design, determined to secure his wife and children under a guard in the citadel, near the temple.

proving mortal, a Gaulish soldier, at his own request, gave him the fatal stroke. Such was the miserable end of Mithridates; a prince who, according to the Roman authors, proved a more powerful and indefatigable adversary to the Romans than the great Hannibal and Pyrrhus, Perseus, or Antiochus. The Romans were so overjoyed at his death that they appointed no less than twelve days for public thank givings to the gods; and Pompey, who had partly hastened his fall, was rewarded with the most uncommon hon ours.—Rollin and Lempriers.

However, in the space of fifteen days, he made himself master of two and twenty castles. And when he had thus secured himself, he collected an army from mount Libanus, Trachonitis, and the princes thereabouts, who were forward enough to assist the stronger side, from a prospect of the advantages they might reasonably expect for the service of raising a new king to the throne. Upon this situation of affairs Hyrcanus and the elders of the Jews applied themselves to the queen for advice and direction respecting Aristobulus, who was now possessed of great power. found her, to their grief, in great danger, but as long as she lived they could do nothing without her acquiescence, even though they saw themselves upon the very brink of ruin.

The queen replied, that not being in a condition to undertake the affairs of government, she had laid all those cares aside, and transferred them wholly on their wise sect, who had the means of defence in their own hands, the strength of the nation entire, and wanted neither men nor money. Soon after this address she died, in the ninth year of her reign, and the seventy-third of her life.

This princess, though extremely ambitious in her disposition, evinced an extraordinary concern for the due regulation of her government, to which she attended as the main object of her pursuit. She was no less eminent for her moderation, integrity, and justice, and upon the whole may be transmitted to posterity as a character in dives in the ces, worthy of imitation.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

воок х.

FROM THE DEATH OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In all the revolutions to which nations and empires are subjected, nothing comes to pass by chance. The infinite Mind has arranged the most minute circumstances, however varied, and however numerous, in order to produce some important re-And whilst mankind are anxiously busied in perpetuating the power of their families, in founding kingdoms, and, if that were possible, rendering them eternal, the omniscient God overthrows all their projects, and makes even their ambition the means of executing his purposes.

God has vouchsafed to discover to us, in the holy scriptures, a part of the relation of the several nations of the earth to his own people; and the little so discovered, diffuses great light over the history of those nations. They alone display and bring to light the secret thoughts of princes, their incoherent projects, their foolish pride, their impious and cruel ambition: they reveal the true causes and hidden springs of victories and overthrows; of the grandeur and declension of nations; and teach us what judgment the Almighty forms both of princes and empires, and consequently what idea we ourselves ought to entertain of them. And, besides the visible and sensible con- duties which constitute the band of soci-

nection of sacred and profane history, there is another more secret and more distinct relation with respect to the Messiah, for whose coming God prepared the heathen from far, even by the state of ignorance and dissoluteness in which he suffered them to be immersed during four thousand years. It was to make mankind sensible of the necessity of a Mediator, that he permitted the nations to walk after their own ways; while neither the light of reason, nor the dictates of philosophy, could dispel the clouds of error, or reform their depraved inclinations. Nevertheless, the Sovereign Ruler of the universe darted into the minds of men the rays of several great truths, to dispose them for the reception of others more important. prepared them for the instructions of the gospel by those of philosophers; and it was with this view that God permitted the heathen professors to examine, in their schools, several questions, and establish several principles which are nearly allied to religion. "It is well known," says Rollin, "that the philosophers inculcated the existence of a God, the necessity of a Providence that presides over the government of the world, the ultimate end of man, the reward of the good and punishment of the wicked, the nature of those

ety, the character of the virtues that are the basis of morality, as prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and other similar truths, which, though incapable of guiding men to righteousness, were yet of use to scatter certain clouds and dispel certain obscurities."

At the time when Christ made his appearance on earth, the conquests of the Romans had gained them almost universal empire; and hence, says Mosheim, "a passage was opened to the remotest countries, by the communications which the Romans formed between the conquered provinces. Hence also the nations, whose manners were savage and barbarous, were civilized by the laws and commerce of the conquerors. By this, in short, the benign influence of letters and philosophy was spread abroad in countries which had lain before under the darkest ignorance. all this contributed, no doubt, in a singular manner, to facilitate the progress of the gospel, and to crown the labours of its first ministers and heralds with success."*

The present section of our work, which comprises the history of the Jews from the death of Alexandra to the incarnation of our blessed Saviour, occupies a space of nearly seventy years. During this time the kingdom of Judea was governed successively by Aristobulus II. Hyrcanus II. Antigonus, and Herod the Great. With Antigonus ended the reign of the Asmoneans, after it had lasted from the beginning of Judas Maccabeus's government, -a space of one hundred and twentyseven years. On the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, Herod was put in complete possession of the kingdom of Judea; and he proved a bitter scourge to the Jews. Having forced his way to the kingdom through a great deal of blood, so he found it necessary to establish himself by the same means, and he daily cut off such of

On the death of Herod, the government of Judea was divided by the emperor Augustus amongst his three surviving sons. Archelaus, the eldest of the three, who inherited all the vices of his father, with but few of his better qualities, completely exhausted the patience of the Jews; and, by a series of the most injurious and oppressive acts, drove them, in the tenth year of his reign, to lay their complaints before the emperor Augustus, who, after investigating the merits of the case, deposed the tyrant, and banished

the opposing faction as he most feared. Nature, it is true, had not withheld from him the talents requisite for a lofty and brilliant course of life; but such was his jealous disposition, such the ferocity of his temper, his devotedness to luxury, pomp, and magnificence, so madly extravagant, and so much beyond his means; in short, so extensive and enormous was the catalogue of his vices, that he became an object of utter detestation to the afflicted people over whom he swayed the kingly sceptre. Instead of cherishing and protecting his subjects, he appears to have made them sensible of his authority merely by oppression and violence; so that they complained to the emperor Augustus, at Rome, of his cruelties, declaring they could not have suffered more had a wild beast reigned over them; and Eusebius affirms that the cruelty of this nefarious despot far surpassed whatever had been represented in tragedy! Herod was not ignorant of the hatred which he had drawn upon himself; but to soften its asperity, he became a professed devotee to the Jewish religion, and at a vast expense restored their temple, which through age had fallen into decay: yet the effect of all this was destroyed by his still conforming to the manners and habits of those who worshipped a plurality of gods; and so many things were countenanced, in direct opposition to the Jewish religion, that the hypocrisy of the tyrant's professions were too manifest to admit of a doubt.

^{*} Origen, among others, makes particular mention of this, in the second book of his answer to Celsus.

him to Vienne in Gaul. On his expulsion, the greater part of Palestine, or Judea, was reduced by the Roman government into the form of a province, and placed under the superintendence of a governor, who was subject to the control of the president of Syria. The change, however, instead of producing an alleviation of misery to this unhappy people, brought with it an intolerable increase of their calamities. For, independently of the avarice and injustice of the governors, to which there were no bounds, it proved an intolerable grievance to them, who considered their nation to be God's peculiar people, that they should be obliged to pay tribute to a heathen, and an enemy of the true God, like Cæsar, and live in subjection to those who worshipped false deities. Add to which, that the extortion of the publicans, who after the Roman manner were entrusted with the collection of the revenue, and for whose continual and flagrant abuses of authority it was seldom possible to obtain any sort of redress, became a subject of infinite dissatisfaction and complaint. And, to crown the whole, the constant presence of their governors, surrounded as they were by a multitude of foreign attendants of all descriptions, and protected by a Roman military guard, quartered, with their eagles and various other ensigns of superstition, in the centre of Jerusalem, their holy city, kept the sensibility of the Jews continually on the rack, and excited in their minds a degree of indignation bordering on fury. They naturally considered their religion to be disgraced and insulted by these innovations-their holy places defiled-and in fact themselves, with all that they held sacred, polluted and brought into contempt. To these causes are to be attributed the frequent tumults, factions, seditions, and murders, by which it is well known that these unfortunate people accelerated their own destruction.*

Notwithstanding this, the Jews multiplied so prodigiously, that the narrow bounds of Palestine were no longer sufficient to contain them. They poured, therefore, their increasing numbers into the neighbouring countries, and that with such rapidity, that, at the time of Christ's birth, there was scarcely a province in the empire where they were not found carrying on commerce, and exercising other lucrative arts. They were maintained in foreign countries, against injurious treatment and violence, by the special edicts and protection of the magistrates; and this, indeed, was absolutely necessary, since, in most places, the remarkable difference of their religion and manners from those of the other nations, exposed them to the hatred and indignation of the ignorant and bigotted multitude. appears to have been most singularly and wisely directed by the adorable hand of an interposing providence, to the end that this people, who were the sole depository of the true religion, and of the knowledge of one supreme God, being spread abroad through the whole earth, might be every where, by their example, a reproach to superstition, contribute in some measure to check it, and thus prepare the way for that yet fuller discovery of divine truth, which was to shine upon the world from the ministry and gospel of the Son of

CHAPTER I.

An agreement between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus produces terms of accommodation.—Aristobulus is besieged in the temple of Jerusalem by Aretas.—The Jews retire into Egypt.—Stoning of Onias.—Divine judgments inflicted on the people for this murder, together with their perfidty and sacrilege.—Aristobulus compels Aretas to quit the siege.—Aretas and Hyrcanus sustain an entire defeat.—Pompey marches against Aristobulus, who, having delivered up his castles, retires in disgust to Jerusalem, whither Pompey advances, and besieges that city.—Jerusalem divided into tw. parties.—The temple is taken by assault.—

^{*} See Jones' Ecclesiastical History.

Moderation of the conqueror.—The city made tributary.—Aristobulus carried prisoner to Rome.

It was in the third year of the hundred and seventy-seventh olympiad,* when Hyrcanus took upon himself the pontificate, and Aristobulus immediately made war upon him. They engaged at Jericho, and many of Hyrcanus's soldiers deserted, and went over to his brother; himself being driven into the citadel, where the wife and children of Aristobulus were kept prisoners by the orders of his mother; and the remainder of the faction took

sanctuary for a time within the verge of the temple, but surrendered themselves soon after.

In process of time, their enmity subsided, and the brothers came to an accommodation, on account that Aristobulus should be established in the possession of the government, and Hyrcanus be allowed to live in private upon his own fortune, without molestation. This contract was signed and ratified in the temple, with the usual formalities, after which the brothers departed in perfect amity to their respective places of residence.

In consequence of an agreement between Hyrcanus and an eastern prince called Aretas,† who kept his court at a place called Petra; the latter advanced against Aristobulus with an army of fifty thousand horse and foot; fought, and overcame him; insomuch, that finding himself abandoned by his soldiers going over to Hyrcanus, he was forced to fly for refuge to Jerusalem; where Aretas with his whole army attacked him in the very temple,—the people unanimously joining with Hyrcanus against Aristobulus, the priests only excepted.

Aretas, on the other hand, with his Jews, as well as Arabians, carried on the assault with the utmost vigour. While this transaction was in hand, the feast of unleavened bread coming on, which the Jews call the passover, the chief men of the Jews withdrew themselves out of the country, and went into Egypt; at which time, one Onias, a righteous man, apprehending the approach of a civil war, retired and concealed himself.

The Jews reflecting upon the piety of this man, and that he had obtained rain from God in an extreme drought, brought him out into the camp, and there requested of him, that as he had formerly deliver-

^{*} The Olympiad was a certain space of time which elapsed between the celebration of the olympic games. The olympic games were celebrated after the expiration of four complete years, whence some have said that they were observed every fifth year. This period of time was called Olympiad, and became a celebrated era among the Greeks, who computed their time by it. The custom of reckoning time by the celebration of the olympic games, was not introduced at the first institution of these festivals, but to speak accurately, only the year in which Corcebus obtained the prize. This olympiad, which has always been reckoned the first, fell, according to the accurate and learned computations of some of the moderns, exactly 776 years before the Christian era, in the year of the Julian period 3938, and 23 years before the building of Rome. The games were exhibited at the time of the full moon, next after the summer solstice; therefore the olympiads were of unequal length, because the time of the full moon differs 11 days every year, and for that reason they sometimes began the next day after the solstice, and at other times four weeks after. The computations by olympiads ceased, as some suppose, after the 364th, in the year 440 of the Christian era. It was universally adopted, not only by the Greeks, but by many of the neighbouring countries, though still the Pythian games served as an epoch to the people of Delphi and to the Bœotians, the Nemæan games to the Argives and Arcadians, and the Isthmian to the Corin-thians and the inhabitants of the Peloponnesian isthmus. To the olympiads, history is much in-debted. They have served to fix the time of many momentous events, and indeed before this method of computing time was observed, every page of history is mostly filled with obscurity and contradiction, and no true chronological account can be properly established and maintained with certainty. The mode of computation, which was used after the suppression of the olympiads, and of the consular fasti of Rome, was more useful, as it was more universal; but while the era of the creation of the world prevailed in the east, the western nations in the 6th century began to adopt with more propriety the Christian epoch, which was propagated in the 8th century, and at last, in the 10th, became legal and popular .- Lempriere.

[†] This Aretas was the first king of the Arabians who took Damascus, and reigned there; which name became afterwards common to such Arabian kings, both at Petra and Damascus, as we learn from Josephus in many places, and from St Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 32.

ed them from the judgment of a famine, he would now relieve them from a most destructive war, by denouncing a curse upon Aristobulus and his whole faction.

He refused compliance a considerable time, till at length being overruled by the multitude, he stood up in the midst of them, and delivered an ejaculatory prayer to this purpose: "Lord, thou art the King of kings; and since both we who stand here before thee are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple are thy priests, I do humbly beseech thee not to hear the prayer of either of them one against the other."

Upon these words some of the Jewish rabble that stood by stoned him to death. This barbarity was followed immediately by a divine judgment, which thus avenged the murder of Onias: while Aristobulus with the priests were thus beset in the temple, the paschal festival came on; at which time, according to custom, the Jews offered up a number of sacrifices; but the besieged, not having so many as they had occasion for, desired their brethren to supply them at their own price; upon which they agreed at one thousand drachmas each beast, and the money to be paid down on delivery.

Aristobulus and the priests agreed to the conditions, and let down the money with a rope from the temple wall. When the besiegers had the money, they refused to deliver the victims; and such was their impiety, that they did not only break faith with men, but sacrilegiously robbed God himself of a service that was dedicated to his honour.

The priests, upon this perfidy imposed upon them under the countenance of an agreement, joined in a prayer to God that the iniquity might not escape unpunished. Their prayers were heard, and the judgment not long deferred; for there arose immediately a violent tempest, that destroyed all the fruits of the earth through the whole province; so that one measure of wheat was sold for eleven drachmas.

Pompey was at this time detained in Armenia, by a war he maintained there with Tigranes; but in the interim sent Scaurus, his lieutenant, into Syria. As he was upon the way, there came ambassadors from Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, soliciting an alliance offensive and defensive. Aristobulus offered four hundred talents, and Hyrcanus the same consideration. Scaurus inclining rather to Aristobulus, as the most generous of the two, accepted his money, and ordered Aretas to withdraw, upon the peril of being accounted an enemy to the Roman people.

Scaurus, after this, went to Damascus, and Aristobulus advanced with a mighty army against Aretas and Hyrcanus; and engaging them in a place called Papyron, gave them an overthrow, with the loss of about six thousand of the enemy.

Pompey, incensed at the arrogant behaviour of Aristobulus, advanced against him at the head of a formidable army, and receiving intelligence that he had retreated to a mountain in the heart of Judea, sent him a summons to come down and speak with him. Aristobulus obeyed the summons, and there passed some discourse between them concerning the two brothers; after which Aristobulus, with Pompey's leave, returned to the castle.

This intercourse he repeated in order to maintain good terms with Pompey, as the most likely way to compass his end; but this did not hinder him from putting himself into a posture of defence in case of an attack. Pompey, at length, ordered him to deliver up all the castles that he was master of, and to signify his will and pleasure to the governors under his own hand, that there might be no plea for non-compliance with his order. Aristobulus did as he was ordered, but resented it so heinously, that he went forthwith to Jerusalem, to make preparations for carrying on a war.

Pompey first having refreshed his people, advanced toward Jerusalem. Aristobulus, by this time, repented of what he

an offering of a sum of money, and the with extreme danger and labour. command of the town, for desisting from hostilities. Pompey accepted his proposals, and sent Gabinius with a body of men into the city to receive the money; but this was mere illusion, for the gates were shut against him and he came back as he went out; the fault being laid upon the soldiers that would not stand to the Pompey was so incensed at this insult, that he kept a stricter guard upon Aristobulus, and went himself to Jerusalem, determined on the conquest of that famous and well fortified city.

While Pompey was before the town, the citizens were divided concerning the manner in which they should act in this critical juncture; some were for yielding; others for holding out, and preparing for a war; especially as Aristobulus was kept a prisoner. Thus divided, one party took possession of the temple, and broke down the bridge between that and the city; while the other not only gave entrance to the army, but delivered up both city and palace into the hands of Pompey; who presently sent Piso his lieutenant, with part of his army to take charge of both. When things were come to this pass, Pompey made them a proposal of peace; but upon their refusal to treat, provided for an assault; Hyrcanus supplying him with all necessary assistance.

The north side of the temple being the weakest part, Pompey proposed to begin his attack in that quarter.' It was encompassed with high towers, and surrounded with a wide and deep ditch. The city side, toward Pompey's station, was impassable, for rocks and precipices; but the Romans, with infinite labour and difficulty. filled up the ditch with timber and other materials, and raised platforms and ramparts to such a prodigious height, that with battering engines which they brought from Tyre, they attacked the temple-wall; yet if it had not been for the advantage

had done, and went out to meet him with would not have gained their point but

When the Romans understood the regard they paid to their sabbath, and observed that they made no opposition to the advancing of their bulwarks, and the fixing of their machines, they employed the sabbath in preparation for the action of the next day, without attempting any violence upon the present. This temple, however, was taken upon a fasting-day, in the third month of the siege; Caius Antonius, and Marcus Tullius Cicero, being consuls.

Upon the enemies' forcing the place, they put every man to death; nor was this cruelty sufficient to deter the priests from prosecuting the duties of their functions, accounting it less evil to fall into the hands of an unmerciful enemy, than to abandon their holy profession, or fail in the least point of obedience to their country's rites and ceremonies.

The enemy plied their engines upon the great tower, till by dint of repeated battering they shook it to pieces, and brought it down to the ground, carrying away a great part of the next wall along with it in the ruins. This breach was no sooner made, than the enemy pressed in great numbers into the temple. Thus was this sacred place taken by assault, and from a scene of worship converted into a scene of blood, being strewed with dead bodies, some killed by the Romans, others by consent despatching one another; some again casting themselves down headlong from the walls, and others setting fire to the houses over their heads, rather than be spectators of the barbarities that were committed. There were slain about twelve thousand Jews, and not many Romans. Absalom, the uncle, and the father-in-law of Aristobulus, was taken prisoner.

These outrages were attended with many violations of the sacred rites of religion; but Pompey and his train behaved with great moderation; and the conqueror they took of the sabbath, the Romans not only abstained from touching any of the holy things, but ordered the officers of the temple next day to purge the place, and to offer sacrifices according to their own customs and ordinances.*

* It was not, says Cicero, out of respect for the majesty of the God adored in that temple, that Pompey behaved in this manner; for, according to him, nothing was more contemptible than the Jewish religion, more unworthy the wisdom and grandeur of the Romans, nor more opposite to the institutions of their ancestors. Pompey in this noble disinterestedness, had no other motive than to deprive malice and calumny of all means of attacking his reputation. Such were the thoughts of the most learned of the pagans. It hath been observed that till then Pompey had been successful in all things, but that after his sacrilegious curiosity in daring to enter the holy of holies, his good fortune forsook him, and that the advantage gained over the Jews was his last victory .- Notwithstanding he had obtained a large commission to govern the provinces of Spain and Africa, he had since the time of his victories in Asia, continued for the space of twelve years for the most part in Rome. But the boundless ambition of Cæsar awakened him from his dream, and he was compelled to flee the imperial city on Casar's passing the Rubicon. The battle of Pharsalia terminating in his defeat and the total overthrow of his army, he with difficulty made his escape in disguise, and determined to flee to Egypt. He had been a very considerable friend to the late king Ptolemy Auletes, the father of the reigning king, and therefore he expected a kind reception from his son. Taking therefore his wife Cornelia, and his younger son Sextus with him, he steered his course towards Egypt, and as he drew near to land, sent messengers to the king desiring his protection and aid in his present distress. The king was then a minor, under the tuition of Pothinus a cunuch, and Achillas the general of his army, who, taking Theodotus, and some others into the consultation, advised together what answer to send. Pompey in the meantime waited the result of that council, and chose rather to expose himself to be the football of three unworthy persons who governed the prince, than to owe his safety to Cæsar, who was his father-in-law, and the greatest of the Romans. This council differed in opinion; some were for receiving him, others for having him told to seek a retreat elsewhere. Theodotus approved neither of these methods; and displaying all his eloquence, undertook to demonstrate, that there was no other choice to be made than that of ridding themselves of him. His reason was, because, if they received him, Cæsar would never forgive the having assisted his enemy: if they sent him away without aid, and affairs should take a turn in his favour, he would not fail to revenge himself upon them for their re-That therefore there was no security for them, but in putting him to death; by which means they would gain Cæsar's friendship, and prevent the other from ever doing them any hurt; for, said he, according to the proverb, " Dead men do not bite." This advice prevailed, as being in

He restored Hyrcanus to the pontificate, partly for the good offices he had received from him, and partly for the service he had done him in hindering the Jews from taking up arms for Aristobulus. He rendered Jerusalem tributary to the Romans, and reduced all the places that the Jews possessed in Cœlo-syria to their allegiance, confining that populous and powerful nation within the compass of their ancient bounds.

From this period we may justly date the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subjection of the Jewish nation to the Roman yoke, having been compelled to restore to the Syrians what they had taken in the course of a war with them, as well as submit to the transferment of the sovereign authority for the order of the pontificate to the promiscuous herd of the common people.

their opinion the wisest and most safe. Achillas. Septimius, a Roman officer in the service of the king of Egypt, and some others, were charged with putting it into execution. They went to take Fompey on board a shallop, under the pretext that large vessels could not approach the shore without difficulty. The troops were drawn up on the seaside, as with design to do honour to Pompey, with Ptolemy at their head. The perfidious Septimius tendered his hand to Pompey in the name of his master, and bade him come to a king, his friend, whom he ought to regard as his ward and son. Pompey then embraced his wife Cornelia, who was already in tears for his death; and, after having repeated these verses of Sophocles, "Every man who enters the court of a tyrant becomes his slave, though free before," he went into the shallop. When they saw themselves near the shore, they stabbed him before the king's eyes, cut off his head, and threw his body upon the strand, where it had no other funeral than what one of his freedmen gave it with the assistance of an old Roman, who was there by chance. They raised him a wretched funeral-pile, and for that purpose made use of some fragments of an old wreck, that had been driven ashore there. Cornelia had seen Pompey massacred before her eyes. It is easier to imagine the condition of a woman in the height of grief from so tragical an object, than to describe it. Those who were in her galley, and in two other ships in company with it, made the coast resound with the cries they raised; and weighing anchor immediately, set sail before the wind, which blew fresh as soon as they got out to sea: this prevented the Egyptians, who were getting ready to chase them, from pursuing their design.—See

CHAPTER II.

Judea having been rendered tributary to the Romans, they send Gabinius to check the incursions of Alexander, son of Aristobulus.

—He restores Hyrcanus to the pontificate, and makes some pontifical regulations.—Succeeds in his expedition, and returns to Rome.—Crassus is sent to Judea.—Rifles the temple.—Aristobulus poisoned, and Alexander beheaded.—Cæsar having overcome the faction of Pompey, favours the interest of Hyrcanus and Antipater.—Permits them to rebuild Jerusalem.—A league formed between Athens and Judea.—Also between the Roman senute and the Jews.

JUDEA, through the success of Pompey, becoming subject to the Roman power, and being harassed by the inroads of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, Gabinius was sent to repel his invasions, which having speedily effected, he caused Hyrcanus to be brought to Jerusalem, and restored to the office and exercise of his priesthood.

There were then constituted five courts of justice, and a division was made of the whole province into five equal parts; so that some repaired for judicial decision to Jerusalem, others to Gadara, and others also to Amathus, Jericho, or Sepphoris, which is a city of Galilee. They were by this means delivered from the tyranny they complained of, and restored to the form of an aristocracy.*

Gabinius, after a series of conquests over Aristobulus and Alexander, returned to Rome,† and was succeeded in his commission by Crassus, who treated not the Jews with the lenity of his predecessor; for, being engaged in making preparation for a war with the Parthians, when he arrived in Judea, he seized not only the two thousand talents that Pompey had spared, but pillaged the temple of gold to the value of eight thousand talents more. He carried away with him also a wedge of gold of three hundred minas, ‡ each mina

five provinces, he ordered the inhabitants of each to repair to the court which he had there erected, and from which there was no appeal, except it was to Rome. Besides the two sorts of sanhedrims abovementioned, there was a third court among . the Jews, which was not affected by any of these alterations, and that was the court of three, instituted for the deciding all controversies about bargains, sales, contracts, and all other such matters of common right between man and man. In all which cases, one of the litigants chose one judge, and the other another, and these two chose a third, which three constituted a court to hear, and ultimately determine the matter in contest .- Talmud in Sanhedrim, Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple. and Joseph. Antiq.

+ Gabinius had been an excessively corrupt governor in his province, doing any thing for bribes, selling every thing for money, and extorting vast sums in all places and from all persons. The clamours which came to Rome from every part of his province, so much angered the senate and the people, that they called him home to answer these accusations. His Egyptian expedition likewise, which was beyond the limits of his province, so exasperated them, that they would immediately have proceeded to sentence of condemnation, without tarrying his return, had not Pompey and Crassus interposed to hinder it. On his return the next year three actions were commenced against him, -one of treason, and the other two of corruption, bribery, and other high misdemeanors. The first, by virtue of his money, which was liberally expended on this occasion in bribing the judges, he hardly escaped by a majority of six votes only of the seventy that judged his cause, but being cast in the other two he was sent into banishment. and there lived in poverty till Cæsar brought him back again in the time of the civil wars. Most of the money which he had raked together by oppression, bribery, and corruption, was spent in bribing and corrupting others; and thus his vast treasure was wasted in the same way of iniquity in which it was gotten .- Prideaux.

† An Hebrew mina of gold, according to Calmet's tables, weighed one pound, one ounce, thirteen pennyweights, eighteen grains, and in value amounted to fifty-four pounds fifteen shillings; three hundred therefore must weigh no more than

^{*} Before this, the government had been managed, under the prince, by two sorts of councils, or courts of justice; one consisting of twenty-three persons, called the lesser sanhedrim; and the othof the first sort, there was one in every city; only in Jerusalem (because of the greatness of the place) there were two, which sat apart from each other in two distinct, rooms. Of the latter sort, there was only one in the whole land. The lesser sanhedrim despatched all affairs of justice, arising within the respective cities, where they sat, and the preciocts belonging to them. The great sanhedrim presided over the affairs of the whole nation, received appeals from the lesser sanhedrims, interpreted the laws, and, by new institutions from time to time, regulated the execution of them. All this Gabinius abolished: and, instead thereof, erected five courts, or sauhedrims, and invested them all with sovereign power, independent of each other. And having divided the land into

The prodigious mass of money that was deposited in this temple, was the acquisition of a long course of time, and collected from all quarters of the world, wherever the worship of the true God was known.

When Crassus had thus rifled the temple of Judea from top to bottom, he advanced against the Parthians, and gave them battle, when he was cut off, together with his whole army.* But Cassius, the questor of Crassus, took possession of Parthia, and stopped the progress of the Parthians, that were grown insolent upon their success. He went afterward to Tyre, and so to Judea, where he took Taricheæ by assault, and thirty thousand prisoners; and amongst the rest Pitholaus, Aristobulus's friend, whom he caused to

three hundred and forty-two ounces, five pennyweights; and their value amounts only to sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five pounds

English money.

* When Crassus led his army into Mesopotamia there came to him a certain chief of an Arabian tribe, who, having served in the wars under Pompey, had contracted an acquaintance with several of the Romans, and was therefore a more proper instrument for Surenas, the Parthian general, to employ upon this occasion. He told Crassus, inquiring about the strength of the enemy, that they were unable to stand before him, and that, to obtain a complete victory, he had nothing to do but march directly against them, for which purpose he offered himself to be their guide. Crassus was weak enough to accept of his offer; and, accordingly, the crafty man led them along the plains of Mesopotamia, until he had brought them into a sandy desert, where the Parthians, he knew, would have the best opportunity of destroying them, and then rode off to acquaint Surenas with it, who immediately fell upon them, and gave them a terrible defeat. Nor was this the only false step that Crassus made: for, having rested the remains of his army for one day at Carrhæ, not far from the place where the battle was fought, when, in the night following, he endeavoured to make his escape, he committed himself to the guidance of one Andromachus, another traitor, who led him into the midst of bogs and morasses, where Surenas overtook him, slew him, and gave his army the greatest overthrow that the Romans had ever received since the battle of Cannæ; for, in this engagement, twenty thousand were slain, and ten thousand taken prisoners; and the rest forced to make their escape by several ways into Armenia, Cilicia, and Syria.—Plutarch and Ap-

being computed at two pounds and a be put to death by the advice of Antipater, + a person of very considerable influence with the Idumeans, upon the account of a marriage with an Arabian lady of an illustrious extraction, called Cypron, by whom he had four sons, Phasael and Herod, (afterwards king,) Joseph and Pheroras, and an only daughter named Salome. ±

> + Eusebius, and Julius Africanus tell us, that the father of this Antipater was an heathen, and an inhabitant of Ascalon; that a company of robbers having pillaged a temple, near Ascalon, took this young Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, who at that time was the priest of the temple, away with them; and that his father, being unable to redeem him, they carried him into Idumea, where he settled, and made his fortune. But there is much more probability, that what Josephus, in the History of the Jewish Wars, lib. i. c. 5. tells us of this great man may be true; namely, that he was the son of another Antipater, who was made governor of Idumæa by Alexander Jannæus; and, as to his religion, there is no question to be made but that he was a Jew and circumcised; because the Idumæans had long before received circumcision and the religion of the Jews, even when Hyrcanus made a conquest of their country. This Antipater, having had his education in the court of Alexander Jannæus, and Alexandra his queen, who reigned after him, had wrought himself into the good graces of Hyrcanus, the eldest of their sons, in hopes to rise by his favour, when he should come to the crown after his mother; but when Hyrcanus was deposed, and Aristobulus made king in his place, all the measures which he had taken for his advancement were broken; and, being too obnoxious to Aristobulus ever to have any prospect of favour from him, he thought himself obliged, both in his own interest and defence, to act the part we find he did.—Calmet's Dictionary, and Prideaux's Connection.

> I Salome was one of the most wicked of women. She first married Joseph, whom she accused of familiarities with Mariamne, wife of Herod, and thus procured his death. She afterward married Costobarus; but being disgusted with him, she put him away; a license till then unheard of among the Jews, whose law (says Josephus) allows men to put away their wives, but does not allow women equal liberty. After this, she accused him of treason against Herod, who put him to She caused much division and trouble in Herod's family, by her calumnies and mischievous informations; and she may be considered as the chief author of the death of the princes Alexander and Aristobulus, and of their mother Mariamne. She afterwards conceived a violent passion for an Arabian prince called Sillæus; whom she would have married against her brother Herod's consent: and even after she had married Alexas, her inchnation for Sillæus was notorious. Salome survived Herod, who left her by will the cities of

Antipater by his generosity and affability had acquired universal esteem amongst the neighbouring princes and potentates, and contributed not a little towards reconciling the Romans to the Jewish state and nation.

When Cæsar's party had prevailed, and he consequently become master of Rome, Aristobulus, having been released by the conqueror, was despatched into Syria, with the command of two legions to keep that province in order. But the happiness he promised himself in the honour of being Cæsar's favourite was not of long duration; for Pompey's faction found means in a short time to despatch him by poison, and the Cæsareans took care of the funeral. His body lay embalmed a long time, till Anthony sent it into Judea to be interred among their kings.

Scipio caused the head of Alexander the son of Aristobulus to be cut off by order of Pompey, for former seditious practices against the Romans, and the command was executed at Antioch.

Hyrcanus and Antipater, who now acted conjunctively in the cause of the Jews, exerted themselves with such vigour and resolution, that when Cæsar arrived in Syria, he conferred the pontificate on the former, and made the other a freeman of Rome, vesting him with all the privileges of that city.

About this time Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, came with a complaint to Cæsar, that his father had been poisoned by a faction for bearing arms in his service, and that his brother had his head cut off at Scipio's instigation; setting forth how he was disinherited and ejected, and presented himself as an object of his compassion. He reflected also upon Hyrcanus and Antipater, as usurpers; but An-

Jamnia, Azoth, and Phasaelis, with 50,000 pieces of money. She favoured Antipas against Archelaus, and died A. D. 9, a little after Archelaus had been banished to Vienne in Dauphiny. Salome had five children by Alexas; Berenice, Antipater, Calleas, and a son and a daughter, whose names are not mentioned.—Joseph. Antiq.

tipater being then present, wiped off these reproaches, by exposing the turbulent and seditious humour of Antigonus, and how busy he was in all factious cabals, not forgetting to remind Cæsar of his own services, appealing to the proofs he had given of his disposition and integrity.

Cæsar, in fine, upon a full hearing of his representation, pronounced Hyrcanus to be high-priest, gave Antipater his choice of any command, and conferred upon him

the lieutenancy of Judea.

The walls of Jerusalem lying at this time in ruin, as they were left upon Pompey's demolishing them, Hyrcanus requested Cæsar for permission to rebuild them; his request was immediately granted with all the forms of respect, and letters despatched to the consuls at Rome, for the entering of the resolution in the records of the capital; the copy of the decree running as follows:

"A decree of the senate assembled in the temple of Concord, on the 15th day of the month of December, present L. Coponius and Caius Parius Quirinus .-Whereas it appeareth unto this senate. upon the report of Valerius the son of Lucius, prætor, that it is requested and proposed by Alexander, the son of Dorotheus, ambassadors on behalf of the Jews, good men, and our faithful allies, that the ancient league of friendship may be renewed between us; and that in token of their gratitude, they have brought a present of a golden cup and buckler, valued at sixty thousand crowns. Also desiring letters of recommendation to all governors and free towns for a passage, both by sea and land, through all their ports and ter-Be it therefore ordered by this ritories. senate, that the same league of friendship and society be renewed and established, all the desires of the said ambassadors agreed unto and granted, and their presents accepted."

This was in the ninth year of the pontificate and principality of Hyrcanus, and in the month of Panemus. This prince of the Jews had great honour done him also by the republic of Athens, in acknowledgment of their obligations to him; for they sent him a decree to the following purpose:

"A decree of the Athenians, bearing date the 25th of Panemus .- Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, and the high-priest and prince of the Jews, hath upon all occasions, both public and private, as well in the generous reception, entertainment, and accommodation of our ambassadors, as otherwise, given proof of a singular affection and esteem, both for our nation in general, and the citizens of Athens in particular, whereof we have received many instances; and forasmuch as we have received credible information from Theodosius, of the virtue of the said excellent prince, and of his friendly disposition to do us all the good offices in his power, we have resolved to present him with the honorary acknowledgment of a crown of gold, and to erect a brazen statue to him in the temple of the people and the graces, for the fame of his memory; and to have it notified by proclamation at the exhibiting of any new show, in all the theatres and places of public exercise, and spectacles in honour of Bacchus, Minerva, Ceres, &c. that we have presented him with this crown out of veneration for his virtue. And we do further require of all our governors and magistrates to be aiding and assisting in the effectual improvement of these our concessions to the best advantage of our friends and associates, so long as this amity shall continue between us: for the manifestation of our gratitude, piety, and justice, toward all men of worth and honour, and the encouraging of good offices and inclinations toward us for the future. do likewise order, that a fit choice be forthwith made of ambassadors from among the Athenians, to attend Hyrcanus in our name. and with this our decree and presents; and to provoke an emulation to outdo us in this generous way of competition."

So far may suffice for the intercourse of friendship that passed between the Romans and the Athenians with Hyrcanus.

When Cæsar had settled his affairs in Syria, he returned with his navy, accompanied by Antipater, who, immediately upon his return to Jerusalem, gave orders for the repairing of the walls that Pompey had thrown down; taking a tour at the same time throughout the province, to promote order and decorum.

He laid before them the blessings of a dutiful obedience to their prince, in the peaceable enjoyment of their liberties and possessions, and the dangerous consequences of seditious practices and innovations, which would force governors to turn persecutors, Hyrcanus to turn tyrant, and the most necessary of their patrons and allies, even the Cæsars and the senate of Rome, to become their implacable enemies. With these admonitions he disposed the whole country to peace and quiet.

CHAPTER III.

Antipater effects the preferment of his sons Phasael and Herod.—Is embroiled through the ambition of Herod, who is cited before the judges.—Bold address of Simeas upon the occasion.—Insolence of Herod toward Hyrcanus.—Divers proclamations in favour of the Jews.

ANTIPATER, in this state of elevation, availed himself of the inactivity of Hyrcanus, to aggrandize his own family, by putting his two eldest sons Phasael and Herod into two eminent commands, appointing the former that of Jerusalem, with the adjacent country; and conferring on Herod, his second son, the government of Galilee.

Herod, at that time but twenty-five years of age, was of a pregnant genius and enterprising spirit, and promised to signalize himself in the command.

The borders of Syria were in those days very much infested with robbers; so that the first instance of his prowess was

upon a vagabond troop of freebooters, wherein he took Hezekiah their commander prisoner, with several of their companions, and put them to death.

This action gained him such reputation, that his name was celebrated through all the towns and villages, as their deliverer, and the author of their security and repose. By the fame of this exploit, he became also known to Sextus, the kinsman of Cæsar the Great, who had then the administration of Syria; besides, it kindled an emulation in Phasael likewise, to imitate the example of his brother, who applied himself to the arts of popularity, as the most probable way for compassing his ends.

The power and influence of Antipater created him many enemies among the leading men of the Jews; several of whom endeavoured to traduce his character, and bring upon him the popular odium, by insinuating that he had embezzled considerable sums, which he received from Hyrcanus for the use of the Romans.

But the principal thing which they alleged as the cause of their dissatisfaction, was the violent, daring, and ambitious temper of Herod, insomuch that, in the heat of their indignation, they went to Hyrcanus with a complaint to this effect: "How long shall the state sustain these injuries, unnoticed by you? Do not you perceive that the dignities, profits, and prerogatives of royal power, are shared between Antipater and his two sons; and that you yourself have only the empty name and title of a prince? Beware of letting things go too far, and being oversecure; for certainly the safety of your person and government lie equally at stake." In consequence of this application to Hyrcanus, Herod was cited to appear before the sanhedrim.

He obeyed his summons; but as he made his appearance in a purple robe, and surrounded with his guards, he so overawed the council, that they all sat silent without saying a word against him;

at length Sameas, an upright and eloquent counsellor, thus harangued the culprit and the court: "With the permission of yourself, Sir, and of this honourable court, I must observe, that this is the first time that ever I saw a prisoner at the bar behaving himself with such an air of vanity and confidence. It has been the practice formerly, of persons in his condition, to demean themselves with sobriety and resignation; but we have a criminal that values himself upon his guards, his ornaments, and his purple; and stands in a posture to make public justice more dangerous to the court than to the criminal. God is a God of righteousness and power; and the time will come when this very man, whom you suffer to take these liberties, shall be the ruin of you, both king and judges."

Not long after, upon Herod's getting possession of the government, he put Hyrcanus to death, and all the judges, except Sameas; for whom he had a singular honour, in regard both of his integrity and justice, and more particularly, as the person, that, after the besieging of the city by himself and Sosias, was instrumental to the admitting of him into the place with this further declaration, that it was a judgment upon them for their sins, and a punishment not to be avoided.

Herod, apprehensive of danger, and perceiving that the major part of the court were inclined to condemn him, withdrew in the night-time from Jerusalem, and retiring to Damascus, resigned himself to the care and protection of Sextus Cæsar, the president of Syria, who settled him, in consideration of a sum of money, in the government of Cœlo-syria. Herod thus possessed of considerable power, and exasperated at the indignity of being exposed to a trial, marched against Hyrcanus with an army; and had it not been for the importunities of his father, and his brother Phasael, he had most certainly fallen upon Jerusalem.

But Herod was so wrought upon by this

showing the people what power and reputation he had upon this occasion.

In order to demonstrate the favour in which the Jews were held by the Romans, the conquerors of the world, we cite the following decree of the senate that passed soon after Julius Cæsar assumed the im-

perial dignity.

"Caius Julius Cæsar, emperor, Pontifex Maximus, and the second time dictator, to the magistracy, senate, and the people of Sidon, greeting .- I myself, and the army are in health, and if you are well, all is well. I send you the copy of a letter of ours to Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander the prince and high-priest of the Jews, to be engraved upon a brass table, the inscription in Latin and Greek, and to remain among your registers for aftertimes. The letter itself in substance is as follows: 'C. Julius Cæsar, emperor, the second time dictator, and Pontifex Maximus, hath, with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed the publication of this decree. Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, a Jew, hath at all times, as well in war as in peace, approved himself to be our trusty good friend and ally, as appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable credit, and particularly by the supply of fifteen hundred choice men that he sent to Mithridates, to my assistance in the late Alexandrian war. These services and good offices duly considered, I do hereby confirm and establish unto Hyrcanus, and his heirs, the perpetual government of the Jews, both as their prince and highpriest, after the manner and method of their own laws; and from this time forward, enrol them among my trusty and beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my associates. And it is my pleasure likewise, that all the legal pontifical rites and privileges be devolved upon him and his sons for ever. And in case any controversy shall arise among the people concerning the Jewish discipline,

advice, that he contented himself with himself, and his family, in the course of succession, to be the only judges of it. It is moreover my will and pleasure, that the Jews be discharged the burden of winter quarters, and of all public payments."

We shall now come to some of his particular grants, resolutions, and decrees: "Caius Cæsar, emperor, dictator, and consul, taking into his consideration the honour, the friendship, and the good services of Hyrcanus, doth hereby, for the benefit and advantage of the senate and people of Rome, grant unto Hyrcanus, and to his sons after him, by succession, the authority and office of princes and priests of Jerusalem, and of the whole nation of the Jews, to be by them exercised and enjoyed in the same manner as their ancestors. And we further ordain and appoint, that the city of Jerusalem shall be repaired and fortified; and that Hyrcanus shall have the administration of the government, with an abatement upon the duty every second year of part of their taxes, and an exemption from carriages and other tributes. Caius Julius, the fourth time emperor, the fifth time consul, and perpetual dictator, makes this mention of Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, the prince and high-priest of the Jews. Whereas my predecessors, as well in the provinces as in the senate, have formerly borne witness to many honourable reports on the behalf of the high-priest Hyrcanus, and the generality of the Jews, who have thereupon received the thanks of the senate and people of Rome, in acknowledgment of their worth and goodness, we look upon their friendly offices as obligations never to be forgotten; and upon ourselves, as bound in the name of the senate and people of Rome, to give Hyrcanus, his family and countrymen, all possible demonstrations of the sense we have of their amity and esteem."

Many others passed of the same kind; but these we omit, as this suffices for our

CHAPTER IV.

After the death of Casar, Cassius enters into a faction, and joins with Herod in oppressing the Jews.—Divers instances of the cruelty and ambition of Herod.—Antipater is poisoned.—Regard of Herod for the Tyrians.—He defeats Antigonus.—Edict in favour of the Jews.

Cæsar having been treacherously assassinated in the senate house,* the citizens of

* While Julius Cæsar was preparing for an expedition against the Parthians, in order to revenge the death of Crassus, and the Romans, that were slain with him at the battle of Corrhæ, on the Ides of March, i. e. on the fifteenth day of that month, four days before he intended to set out upon that expedition, he was murdered in the senate-house by a conspiracy of the senators. This was a most villanous act, and the more so, because the prime authors of it, viz. Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, Trebonius, and some others of them, were the very persons whom Cæsar in the highest manner had obliged, yet it was executed under the notion of an heroic virtue, in thus freeing their country from one whom they called a tyrant; and the manner in which it was executed is this :- as soon as he came into the senate-house, Attilius Cimber, who was one of the conspirators, presented himself (according as it was agreed among them) to demand his brother's pardon, who was banished; but, upon Cæsar's refusal, under pretence of begging it with greater submission, laid hold of the bottom of his robe, and pulled him so hard, that he made him bend his back: then Casca drew his dagger, and stabbed him in the shoulder, but the wound proved but slight, so that Cæsar fell upon him, but, as they were scuffling, another of the conspirators came behind, and stabbed him in the Cassius, at the same time, wounded him in the face, and Brutus pierced his thigh. much courage he still defended himself; but the blood he lost through so many wounds having much weakened him, he went to the foot of Pompey's statue, where he fell and expired, after having been stabbed in three and twenty places, by the hands of those whom he thought he had disarmed by his good offices. Cæsar might have escaped the sword of the conspirators, if he had listened to the advice of his wife, whose dreams, on the night previous to the day of his murder, were alarming. He also received, as he went to the senate-house, a paper from Artemidorus, which discovered the whole conspiracy to him; but he neglected the reading of what might have saved his life. The learning of Cæsar deserves commendation, as well) his military character. He reformed the calendar. He wrote his commentaries on the Gallic wars, on the spot where he fought his battles; and the composition has been admired for the elegance as well as the correctness of its style. This valuable book was nearly lost; and when Cæsar saved his life in the bay of Alexandria, he was obliged to swim from his ship, with his arms in one hand, and his commentaries in the other. Besides the Gallic

Rome formed parties and factions, which were followed by a civil war. Cassius, one of the leading men among the conspirators, obtained the command of the army in Syria, which was then before Apamea, raised the siege, and brought over Marcus and Bassus into his interest; and proceeded from place to place, collecting men, money, and arms wherever he came, but oppressing Judea above all the rest, by an imposition of between seven and eight hundred talents of silver.

In this confusion, Antipater committed the care of levying one part of this money to his two sons, and the rest of it to Malichus, together with some others. Herod, who was willing to oblige the Romans at the expense of the people over whom he presided, began with the most acceptable presents to Cassius, of the contribution of Galilee, as the first fruits of his service; but several cities under other governors were exposed to public sale, by order of

and civil wars, he wrote other pieces, which are now lost. The history of the war in Alexandria and Spain is attributed to him by some, and by others to Hirtius. Cæsar has been blamed for his debaucheries and expenses; and the first year he had a public office, his debts were rated at 830 talents, which his friends discharged; yet, in his pub-lic character, he must be reckoned one of the few heroes that now and then make their appearance among mankind. His qualities were such that in every battle he could not but be conqueror, and in every republic, master; and to his sense of his superiority over the rest of the world, or to his ambition, we are to attribute his saying, that he wished rather to be first in a little village, than second at Rome. It was after his conquest over Pharnaces in one day, that he made use of these remarkable words, to express the celerity of his operations; 'Veni, vidi, vici.' Conscious of the services of a man who, in the intervals of peace, beautified and enriched the capital of his country with pub-lic buildings, libraries, and porticoes, the senate permitted the dictator to wear a laurel crown on his bald head; and it is said, that, to reward his benevolence, they were going to give him the title or authority of king all over the Roman empire, except Italy, when he was murdered. In his private character, Cæsar has been accused of seducing one of the vestal virgins, and suspected of being privy to Catiline's conspiracy. It is said that he conquered 300 nations, took 800 cities, and de-feated three millions of men, one of which fell in the field of battle. Pliny says, that he could employ at the same time, his ears to listen, his eyes to read, his hand to write, and his mind to dictate. -Prideaux, Vertot, and Lempriere.

Cassius, who was so exasperated against Malichus upon this occasion, that if Hyrcanus had not pacified him with a composition of a hundred talents out of his own coffers, by the hands of Antipater, it would have cost him his life.

Malichus therefore entered into a plot against Antipater, inferring, that if he was taken off, Hyrcanus would find himself more easy and secure in his government. Antipater, suspecting his design, passed the river Jordan, and put himself at the head of as many Jews and Arabians as he could collect; but Malichus, who was bold and artful, finding himself suspected, went to Antipater and his sons, and cleared himself of the suspicion by the dint of perjury.

Cassius having assembled a powerful army and fitted out a considerable fleet, conferred the command of both on Herod, and appointed him at the same time governor of Cœlo-syria, with a further promise of the kingdom of Judea, as soon as the war should be over with Anthony, and the younger Cæsar, afterward Augustus, in which they were then engaged.

The promotion of Herod rendering Malichus jealous of the interest that would follow to his father Antipater, he bribed a servant of Hyrcanus to poison him at his master's table, and thereupon, with a guard of soldiers took possession of the city. Such was the unhappy end of Antipater; a just and a good man, and a true lover of his country.

Herod and Phasael resented the murder of their father, but Malichus had the confidence to stand upon his justification. The two brothers were both agreed in the determination of revenge; but the question was, in what manner it was to be effected.*

Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, now entered into a design to oppose Herod, and with this view engaged Fabius for a sum of money to join with him in raising an army, taking Marion also into his assistance, who, by the favour of Cassius, had obtained the command of Tyre and of all Syria, having settled several garrisons there, and three in Galilee, upon his own borders; but Herod quickly reduced these places, treating the Tyrians who kept them with every token of respect, tenderness, and generosity, for the affection he bore towards them.

His next business was immediately to march up to Antigonus, whom he encountered and defeated upon his very entrance into Judea, and returning triumphant from thence to Jerusalem, he was received by Hyrcanus and the whole people with every instance of honour and esteem.

After the defeat of Cassius at Philippi,+

princes, and chief lords of Syria and Palestine hastened thither with their presents and congratulations. Hyrcanus, together with Malichus and Herod, put himself upon the road for the same purpose; and, as they drew near to Tyre, where they were to lodge that night, Herod invited all the company to sup with him; and, sending his servants before, under pretence of providing the supper, by them he communicated the orders of Cassius to the commanders of the Roman garrison in the city, who accordingly sent out a party of armed men, that fell upon Malichus, as he drew near to the place, and slew him — Joseph. Antiq.

+ Philippi is a town of Macedonia, to the inhabitants of which St Paul wrote his epistle; but what made this place the most remarkable, was the famous battle that was fought near it, between the army of Octavianus and Anthony, and that under Brutus and Cassius, consisting of near a hundred thousand men each. Brutus and Cassius both commanded in the action; but Octavianus being sick in his tent, the command of the other army fell wholly upon Anthony. The forces commanded by Cassius were soon repulsed, so that he retired to an hill, there to wait for an account of that part of the army, which was commanded by Brutus: but, in the confusion and dust, not being able to perceive what was doing, his mind misgave him that Brutus was overcome, and thereupon he commanded his servant Pindarus to cut off his head. Brutus, in the first day of action, was so successful, that he made the enemy retire, and took Octavianus's camp; but, in a few days after, coming to a second engagement, he was entirely routed, and, being loath to fall into the enemy's hande, prevailed with his friend Strabo to despatch him: and,

The matter was conducted thus,—Cassius, being informed by Herod of the manner of his father's death, gave him leave to revenge himself on the murderer, and sent his orders to the forces, under his command at Tyre, to be assistant to him therein. On Cassius's taking Laodicea, all the

by Anthony and Cæsar Octavianus,* Cæsar went into Gaul, and Anthony into Asia, who was complimented on his march into Bithynia with embassies and applications from several parts; and among others, with complaints and accusations against Phasael and Herod, from many eminent persons among the Jews, suggesting that Hyrcanus, though he had the name of governor, was in effect but a nominal prince; for that the two brothers had usurped the authority and administration to themselves.

Herod pleaded so well for himself, and enforced his arguments with so large a sum of money, that his adversaries were not admitted to be heard against him.

Upon Anthony's coming to Ephesus, ambassadors were sent from Hyrcanus, the high-priest, and the whole body of the Jews, with a crown of gold, desiring that their countrymen, who were carried away prisoners by Cassius, contrary to the rules of war, might be set at liberty, and their lands restored to those who had been wrongfully deprived of them.

Their request was found to be so reasonable, that Anthony presently granted their petition, and wrote to Hyrcanus, and to the Jews, and likewise despatched an edict to the Tyrians, to the following effect:

"Marcus Antonius, emperor, to Hyrcanus the high-priest, and prince of the Jews, greeting, joy and health.—Whereas we have received from Lysimachus the son of Pausanias, Joseph the son of Menneus, and Alexander the son of Theodorus, your ambassadors at Ephesus, fresh assurances of the continuance of

yours and your people's affection for us, according to what hath been formerly exhibited to us at Rome; in which commission they have faithfully acquitted themselves; and whereas we are abundantly satisfied with the sincerity of your intentions, and more from the proof we have had of your good faith, piety, and virtue, than by the force of words, we do heartily agree to your proposals, and embrace your friendship. It is our pleasure, that you shall quietly enjoy to yourselves and your heirs, all the graces and privileges unto you granted by myself and Dolobella, with an express inhibition to the Tyrians, that they give you no sort of molestation, and as positively commanding them to make full restitution of all the goods and estates that had been taken away from the Jews, declaring our acceptance also of the crown you were pleased to send."

CHAPTER V.

Contract of Antigonus with the Parthians, to depose Hyrcanus, and take off Herod and his party.—Hyrcanus and Phasael are seized, but Herod eludes their design, and after several shirmishes, makes his escape together with a considerable party.—Builds Herodium.—Jerusalem besieged.—Antigonus obtains the government, and avenges himself on Hyrcanus.—Phasael destroys himself.—Herod departs towards Egypt; thence proceeds to Rome.—Is honoured by Augustus; made hing of Judea, and conducted with great pomp to the capital.

Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, envious of the power of Hyrcanus and his party, contracted with the Parthians for a thousand talents, and five hundred of the finest women, to eject the present possessor and invest him with the government of Judea.

Accordingly the king sent his son Pacorus, and his general Barzapharnes, with a powerful army to invade that country. Having divided their forces, Pacorus marched along the coast; and Barzapharnes kept his route through the inland part. The king's son, having Antigon-

what is very remarkable in these two men's deaths is, that they were both killed with the same swords wherewith they had murdered Cæsar.—Plutarch and Dion Cassius.

* Octavianus was the son of Caius Octavius, by Atia the daughter of Julia, sister of Julius Cæsar; and therefore Julius adopted him, as being his nephew, and next male relation, to be his son; upon his uncle's death, he took upon him the name of Caius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, and by this name he was afterwards known, till that of Augustus, which was given after the victory at Actium, swallowed up all the rest.—Prideaux.

us in his party, was joined by the Jews that dwelt about mount Carmel, and many others in the course of their march, so that he had collected a very formidable army, and boldly advanced to the city of Jerusalem, with a determined resolution to attack Herod and Phasael in the royal palace.

Upon their arrival, a considerable faction declared in favour of Antigonus; and Herod, after some fruitless resistance, and vain endeavours to keep the city, betook himself to flight. In the meantime the Parthians seized Hyrcanus and Phasael, and loaded them with irons. Herod, finding himself in an enemy's country, and amongst a people who were averse to his person and government, determined to prosecute his journey to the castle of Massada, together with his nearest relations, lest they likewise should fall into the hands of the combined parties.

In their hasty retreat, the carriage in which Herod's mother rode was unhappily overset, and such was the concern of her son, that, according to the testimony of Josephus, he attempted to stab himself, but being prevented from the execution of so rash a design, pursued his journey towards the intended asylum.

As the number of those who attended him in his flight was very considerable, they repulsed divers parties which endeavoured to molest them, and came off victorious. So strongly was this circumstance impressed upon the mind of Herod, that when he afterwards ascended the throne of Judea, he erected a spacious palace and founded a village upon the spot whereon he had given the enemy the most signal repulse, and called it Herodium.*

Being met at Ressa, a town of Idumea, by

his brother Joseph, they deliberated on future measures, and reflecting that the castle of Massada† was not sufficiently extensive to contain their numbers, concluded to separate, so that having furnished themselves with provisions, and disposed of their women and most valuable baggage in the castle, which was well furnished with necessaries, they formed into parties, and Herod with his body proceeded towards Arabia.

Antigonus, having by this 'time gained possession of the government of Judea, through the assistance of the king of Parthia, was greatly incensed at the escape of the women, and the loss of the money which he had promised as a reward to his allies; so that, in the fury of his resentment, he ordered the ears of Hyrcanus to be cut off, in order to disqualify him for the dignified order of the priesthood.

Phasael, finding his situation desperate, and dreading the revenge of the conqueror, put an end to his life in a most extraordinary manner; for, being manacled, he dashed out his brains against the prison wall.

Herod being arrived on the borders of Arabia, applied to Malchus, the king of that country, to let him have some money by way of loan; for not knowing what was become of his brother, he intended to redeem him, as he feared the resentment of the Parthians; but Malchus not only denied his request, but forbade him by his messengers even from entering his dominions. Thus embarrassed on all sides, he betook himself to Egypt, where he was honourably received, and sumptuously entertained by Cleopatra; but being determined on a passage to Rome, from a view of obtaining the favour and interest of the conquerors of the world, he set forward, and after a tedious and dangerous passage in the midst of winter, landed at Brundusium, and from thence proceeded to Rome.

^{*} The palace was situated about seven miles from Jerusalem. It stood in a very pleasant and a very strong situation, on the top of a hill, from whence there was a prospect of all the country round. From this palace the hill declined all around with an equal and uniform descent, which had a very beautiful aspect; and at the foot of it were soon built such a number of houses, as amounted to the proportion of a considerable city.—Prideaux.

[†] This strong fortress was built on the top of a mountain, near the west side of the lake Asphaltites.

tion, and endued with great eloquence, he represented his late adventures in such striking terms to Anthony, that the genlous Roman, wrought upon by the afrecting tale, and the remembrance of his father Antipater, not only espoused his cause, but engaged Cæsar in his interest, to the great joy of the ambitious suppliant.

The case of Herod was soon after brought before the senate, who, in consequence of Anthony's setting forth in a very elaborate manner the service he had done the Roman commonwealth, and representing the indignity they had sustained from Antigonus, in accepting the government from gonus a professed enemy to the state.

When the senate broke up, Cæsar and Anthony, accompanied by a great number of the members, conducted Herod with the utmost solemnity to the capitol, where they sacrificed with the usual solemnity, and deposited the decree that had lately passed.

Anthony then entertained the king in the most sumptuous manner, and publicly congratulated him on the honours which had been conferred upon him in so signal a manner, by the most dignified people of the universe.

CHAPTER VI.

Herod's party distressed in Massada .- He marches to their assistance, reinforced by the Romans .- Obtains very considerable advantages by the reduction of divers places .- Sets his friends at liberty.- Encamps near Jerualem .- Recovers Galilee .- His brother Joseph hrough inadvertence loses his life .- Siege of Jerusalem carried on with great vigour on both sides .- Terminates in favour of Herod, who causes Antigonus to be put to death .-Extinction of the family of Asmodeus.

WHILE the interest of Herod was so essentially promoted by the concurrence of the Roman senate, his friends, who were blocked up in the castle of Massada, were ex-

Being versed in all the arts of insinua- | posed to great hardships, through the pressure of Antigonus, and a great dearth of water, insomuch that being on the point of surrender, Joseph had conceived a design of escaping with his nearest relatives, and those of the party who were most firmly attached to his cause. But the design was happily obviated, by a prodigious shower of rain, that fell on the very night which they had proposed for its execution. Being thus supplied with water, the besieged made a most furious sally, and repelled a party of the assailants with great

Herod having received intelligence at Ptolemais, whence he had lately arrived the hands of the Parthians, pronounced from Rome, of the situation of his friends. Herod king of Judea, and declared Anti- raised a considerable army, amongst whom was a party of Romans, under the command of Ventidius * and Silo his lieutenant in Palestine; determined to act with the utmost vigour and resolution, in order to recover his kingdom, as well as relieve his friends.

> Most of the Galileans joined him in his march, so that having reduced Joppa, he advanced to Massada, which having compelled to surrender, he set his friends at liberty; and after he added the castle of Ressa, a strong fortress in Idumea, to his conquests, proceeded to Jerusalem, and encamped on the west side of that city.

> Antigonus had taken every necessary precaution for its defence and security; he had supplied it with a numerous garrison, well furnished with warlike stores, so

^{*} Ventidius Bassus was a native of Picenum. and born of an obscure family. When Asculum was taken, he was carried before the triumphant chariot of Pompeius Strabo, hanging on his mother's breast. A bold aspiring soul, aided by the patronage of the family of Cæsar, raised him from the mean occupation of a chairman and muleteer to dignity in the state. He displayed valour in the Roman armies, and gradually rose to the offices of tribune, prætor, high-priest, and consul. He made war against the Parthians, and conquered them in three great battles, B. C. 39. He was the first Roman ever honoured with a triumph over Par thia. He died greatly lamented by all the Roman people, and was buried at the public expense .-Lempriere.

that having annoyed the assailants by frequent sallies, he became too confident of success, and sent a herald round the walls, to proclaim indemnity to all that would voluntarily surrender.

To enforce this proclamation, he addressed himself from the wall to Silo, and the Romans under his command, representing the injustice they had done him in transferring the crown from his family, which was of royal descent, to Herod, who was of a plebeian race; adding, that if they were disposed to express their resentment on account of his receiving the kingdom from the Parthians, they might nevertheless have conferred their favours upon some person of royal extraction, as many yet remained, who had never given them any just cause for displeasure.

From these reproaches they came to acts of hostility, and the besieged plied their darts and arrows with such rapidity, that the enemy were soon driven from the walls.

This successful effort was greatly promoted by the treachery of Silo, who, in consequence of a bribe from Antigonus, insinuated to the soldiers of Herod, the barrenness of the country, the inconvenience of their quarters, and their want of every necessary accommodation, which disposed them to wish for a conclusion being put to the siege.

Herod, having received intelligence of these proceedings, reminded Silo in a persuasive tone, that he was not only sent by Cæsar and Anthony, but by the whole senate of Rome; declaring at the same time, that if he and his soldiers would stand their ground, they should be plentifully supplied with all things necessary.

Antigonus having notice of all that passed, despatched parties to lie in ambuscade, and intercept the foragers; but Herod, who was equally active with the enemy, very frequently came up with them, and pursued his advantages with such vigour, that having extended his

victory as far as the river Jordan, all Galilee came over to his allegiance.

Herod finding that notwithstanding this advantage, his affairs were but inconsiderably promoted, as the Roman guards acted with great coolness in his interest, determined to repair to Anthony, leaving his brother Joseph to watch the motions of Antigonus.

Anthony received him, upon his arrival, with every honourable token, treated him in a manner agreeable to his royal character, and assured him, that orders should be immediately despatched to the Roman generals, to exert themselves with as much vigour in his cause, as if they were employed in the actual service of the state.

During the absence of Herod, Joseph, unmindful of his intructions, marched toward Jericho with a detachment, in order to forage: and his party, consisting of unexperienced men, were circumvented by the disciplined troops of Antigonus, and, together with their leader, easily vanquished.

Antigonus finding Joseph among the dead bodies, caused his head to be cut off, and set the price of fifty talents for the redemption of it, which were paid by his brother Pheroras, and this occasioned a revolt of several of the Galileans.

Herod receiving intelligence of the death of his brother, while he was at a place called Daphne, hastened to mount Libanus, where taking eight hundred of the natives, and a Roman legion,* with him, he advanced to Ptolemais, and from thence passing by night through Galilee, was beset in his march, but repulsed the enemy with considerable loss. By this time above eighteen months elapsed, since Herod, upon the honours conferred on

^{*} It is generally thought that a legion was composed of ten cohorts; a cohort, of fifty maniples; a maniple, of fifty men, and consequently, that a legion was a body of six thousand soldiers; but others are clearly of opinion, that it was an uncertain number, and contained sometimes four, sometimes five, and sometimes six thousand men

vernment of Judea; considering therefore, that as long as Jerusalem held out, his possession of other places would be very precarious, he resolved to turn his whole force against the capital, and by reducing that, put a final period to the war, and establish himself on the throne from which he had been expelled.

To accomplish this important design, he encamped before the temple, which he encompassed with a triple trench. His own army consisted of about thirty thousand men, to which were added eleven Roman legions of foot, and six thousand horse, under the command of Sosius, beside the auxiliary troops of Syria. The Jews within the city were resolute and numerous, animating each other, by exclaiming, 'The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord!' and delivering such presages, as, with the blessing of God, seemed to portend their speedy deliverance. In short, they exerted themselves with amazing vigour, and by furious sallies frequently repelled the besiegers.

Herod, observing from their animated conduct that the siege would be long and doubtful, unless he could prevent the conveyance of provisions into the city, so disposed his troops as entirely to cut off all communication. He then prepared his battering engines, and attacked the walls; but the besieged sustained the assault with incredible resolution, opposed stratagem to stratagem, and as soon as one wall was thrown down, supplied it with a retrenchment that served for another. The Jews were at length much straitened for want of provisions; but, animated by despair, determined to hold out to the very last extremity.

At length being reduced to the lowest ebb, Herod entered the city, and the Jews retiring into the inner temple were pursued thither. A horrible scene ensued; for the Romans, exasperated at the obstinate defence which they made, and Herod's party determined on the extirpation of the sephus.

him, had determined to recover the go- faction, put all to the sword, without regard to age, sex, or condition, so that the streets resounded with cries, and blood was spilt in every corner. He likewise put all the members of the great sanhedrim to death, except Pollio and Sameas,* who alone were for delivering up the city to Herod.

> Antigonus finding all resistance vain; determined to submit, but not to Herod: therefore, descending from a tower, he cast himself at the feet of Sosius the Roman general, who, instead of pitying, upbraided him with pusillanimity, and committed him to the custody of a strong guard.

> * They are so named by Josephus, but the Jewish writers generally call them Hillel, and Sham-mai; and of Hillel in particular, they give us this account, namely, that he was born in Babylonia, and there lived till he was forty years old; that when he came to Jerusalem, he betook himself to the study of the law, in which he grew so eminent, that, after forty years more, he became president of the sanhedrim, and that in this office he continued forty years after, so that, according to this account, he lived full an hundred and twenty years; but the Jewish writers, for the sake of a round number, are frequently negligent whether they are exact or not in their chronological computations. Of Shammai they likewise tell us, that he was for some time the scholar of Hillel, and upon the removal of Manahem into Herod's service, was made vice-president of the sanhedrim in his room; and that of all the Tannaim, or Mishnical doctors, he came nearest to his master in eminence of learning, though in many points he differed in opinion from him. What we are chiefly to observe in relation to these two men at present isthat Herod should thus generously forgive them both, though Shammai, or Sameas, was the person who appeared so intrepid against him at his trial before the sanhedrim, and Hillel, or Pollio, had all along warmly espoused the party of Hyrcanus. It must be presumed, however, that these two great men whom he not only spared above all the rest, but took into especial favour and confidence, had during the siege taken care to make their peace with him, by exhorting the besieged to a surrender. For, while the contrary faction was encouraging the people with crying out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' and making them expect some miraculous deliverance, these two wise politicians, foreseeing that the city could not hold out much longer against such a vigorous siege, and under the excessive want of all provisions, told them, in short, that all resistance was in vain, since God, for their sins, was now bringing them into subjection to this foreigner; and this piece of service (had Herod been of a more vindictive temper than he really was) could not well fail of reconciling them to his favour .- Prideaux and Jo

Herod having thus become master of the city, thought it highly expedient to preserve it from plunder. But this he found extremely difficult, and he was obliged to have recourse to entreaty, threats, and at length force, to restrain the people, and especially the mercenaries, from seizing all that came within their reach, and even rifling the temple itself.

However, he amply rewarded the Roman soldiers, who, together with Sosius their general, departed from Jerusalem, carrying Antigonus bound to Anthony. Herod fearing that Anthony would not take away his life, and that therefore he might lay his claim to the government before the Roman senate; which, as he was of royal blood, and himself of plebeian, might render the issue extremely doubtful; by a private message, insinuated to him the necessity of taking off Antigonus.

The Roman was greatly inclined to preserve his royal prisoner to grace his triumph, but being wrought upon by gold, (the most prevalent argument in past time, as well as the present,) after he had briefly harangued on the expediency of the sentence, commanded him to be beheaded.

This action reflects much disgrace upon the memory of Anthony, as it was entirely without a precedent, he being the first Roman general that subjected a conquered prince to such unjust treatment. Thus ended the reign of the illustrious family of the Asmoneans, which in a successive line had held the government of Judea during a hundred and twenty-six years; but were at length rendered extinct by intestine dissension, which has ever proved destructive to all states, families, and societies, amongst whom it has prevailed.

This memorable event fell out upon the day of a solemn fast, being the anniversary of this city's destruction by Pompey, which happened exactly twentyseven years before this dreadful catastrophe

CHAPTER VII.

Respect shown to Hyrcanus in his captivity.—
Herod promotes a person of mean birth to the pontificate, deposes him at the instance of his relations, and advances a person of dignity.—
Instances of the cunning, cruelty, ambition, perfidy, and hypocrisy of Herod.—His artful behaviour towards Anthony.—He joins him against Cæsar Octavianus.— Overthrows the Arabians.—A dreadful earthquake in Judea.
—The Jews sue for peace, and the Arabians put their ambassadors to death.—Herod encourages them, and compels the Arabians to submit.

During the important transactions related in the foregoing chapter, Hyrcanus the high-priest remained in captivity with the Parthians, and was treated with the highest honour and esteem by king Phraates,* who not only released him from his irons, but allowed him the city of Babylon as the bounds of his confinement, where he was received by the Jews, who dwelt in that part, with all the reverence due to his solemn character.

Notwithstanding his situation was rendered thus agreeable through the benevolence of the Parthian king, he discovered a fond desire for returning to his native country, vainly imagining that former services

^{*} Orodes, the father of this Phraates, had thirty sons, born to him of the several wives he had married. He felt perplexed whom he should name his successor instead of his beloved son Pacoras, whom he had lost; for all his wives were anxious to have the crown secured for a son of their own. At length he determined it by seniority, and appointed Phraates, the eldest, who was also the worst of the number. But he was no sooner placed on the throne, than he put to death those of his brothers who were born to his father of a daughter of Antiochus Eusebes, king of Syria; and for no other reason than that they were more nobly descended, and otherwise of greater merit than himself. And finding that his father was much offended at it, he put him to death also. he attempted it by giving him hemlock; but that, instead of killing him, became a medicine to cure him of the dropsy, under which he then laboured. Therefore, to make sure work of it, the parricide caused him to be stifled to death in his bed; and after that he put to death all his other brothers. Whereon, fearing lest the nobility should depose him, and place a son of his upon the throne in his stead, he murdered him also,—which cruelty caused great numbers of the wealthy Parthians to flee the country .- Prideaux.

would secure the favour of Herod. But his most wishes, for Herod hearing of the late friends, from the respect they bore his person, and the suspicion they entertained of the jealousy and perfidy of the king of Judea, endeavoured, by alleging his incapacity for the pontifical dignity through mutilation, to divert the hopes he so fondly cherished; however, he procured his discharge from Phraates, and went to Jerusalem, where he was received with singular respect.

Hyrcanus being rendered incapable of the office of high-priest, Herod began to deliberate with himself concerning the choice of a successor; and from a consciousness of his own low extraction, fearing to advance a person of royal descent, conferred that dignity upon one Hananel, an obscure Jewish priest whom he brought from Babylon.

The promotion of this mean person greatly disgusted Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus, and mother of Aristobulus, who, resenting the contempt offered her family, in setting her son aside and obtruding a foreigner into the pontificate, wrote to Cleopatra queen of Egypt, to engage Anthony* in her cause, that the honour might be conferred on her son, who had an undoubted right to it.

Her application succeeded to her ut-

procedure, at first affected resentment; but, persuaded of the influence of the Egyptian queen with the powerful Roman, a reconciliation was soon effected between him and Alexandra, and followed by the deposition of Hananel,+ and the advancement of Aristobulus to the pontificate.

But Herod's jealousy of Alexandra would not permit the continuance of the reconciliation, for he grew so suspicious of her, that he forbade her to concern herself with public affairs, confined her to the court, and set spies to watch even her domestic economy. Exasperated at such indign treatment, she again applied to Cleopatra, and having received an invitation from that princess, prepared for her departure. To conceal her design from Herod, she had procured two biers, in which the servants were to carry them to the sea side, where a vessel lay ready to convey them to Egypt.

But this stratagem miscarried through the treachery of a servant, that communicated it to one Sabbion, who being suspected of a concern in the poisoning of Antipater, Herod's father, in order to obviate that disgrace disclosed it to Herod. The king suffered them to pass a little way uninterrupted, and then surprised and brought them back; but fearing the power and influence of Cleopatra, who had espoused their interest, he suspended

^{*} Cleopatra, by the charms of her beauty and wit, had drawn him into those snares, which held him enslaved to her as long as he lived, and in the end caused his ruin. She was a woman of great parts, and spake several languages (as well as Latin and Greek) very fluently: but then she was a person of great vices, and, among others, of such insatiable avarice and ambition, that she made a conscience of nothing if she could but get by it. Her brother, a youth of about fifteen years of age, she caused to be despatched, and prevailed with Anthony to have her sister Arsinoë cut off at Ephesus, even in the temple of Diana. Anthony indeed was a man of a sweet temper, and great generosity, an eloquent speaker, and a complete master in all military abilities: but then he was a great libertine in his way, and so eager in the pursuit of his unlawful pleasures that he stuck at nothing to attain them, by which means he brought himself so absolutely under the command of this wicked and voluptuous woman, that, as Josephus expresses it, 'she seems not only to have captivated, but bewitched him.'—Prideaux's Connection, and Joseph. Antiq.

[†] This is the third person that had been de-posed from the pontifical dignity, since the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity; and Herod was so sensible of the illegality of it, that when Anthony sent to desire him to put Aris-tobulus into Hananel's place, at first he excused himself by alleging, that such depositions were contrary to the Mosaic law, which enjoined that the dignity should last as long as the life of the possessor, unless some defect happened to disqualify him. The first instance we meet with ot this kind is that of Jason's supplanting his brother Onias, and, by a larger sum of money, buying that office of Antiochus, in prejudice of the incumbent. The other was that of Hyrcanus, by his nephew Aristobulus, who wrested that dignity from him by main force. But these depositions became afterwards so frequent, that there was hardly any other way of coming into office, but by the expulsion of the incumbent .- Universal History.

his resentment, and affected a kindness for them, though at the same time he meditated revenge on Aristobulus, which he only waited an opportunity to execute; nor was it long before it presented itself.

At the feast of tabernacles, Aristobulus was to officiate as high-priest; he was then in the eighteenth year of his age, of a comely aspect, elegant form, and engag-

ing mien.

When he advanced toward the altar, clad in the pontifical robes, to perform the ceremonies instituted by the law, he discharged his office with such grace, dignity, and solemnity, as attracted the admiration of the whole assembly, and brought to their minds the noble acts of his royal grandfather Aristobulus, whose family they thought deserved a better condition than they now enjoyed.

The general approbation of the multitude increased the envy and jealousy of Herod, and hastened the fate of the royal youth; for when the feast of tabernacles broke up, the king desired him to accompany him to Jericho, where he caused him to be drowned as he was bathing in a

pool.*

Thus was this delectable youth taken off, through the execrable fraud of a wicked king, who immediately restored his creature Hananel to the pontifical dignity.

Herod, to wipe off all suspicion of so foul a deed, visited Alexandra, professed his innocence, and to give his abominable hypocrisy an air of sincerity affected the most poignant grief, and cast forth showers of crocodile tears; but his fradulent acts prevailed not with the disconsolate

The afflicted Alexandra again had recourse to Cleopatra, whom having acquainted with the treacherous behaviour of Herod, and the untimely death of her son, the queen determined to espouse her cause, and therefore solicited Anthony to revenge the fate of Aristobulus.

Anthony, wrought upon by the importunity of Cleopatra, repaired to Laodicea, and cited Herod to clear himself from the imputation concerning the death of Aristobulus.+

Herod, too artful to rely on the merits of his iniquitous cause, and dreading the influence of Cleopatra, who had incensed

mother, who saw his villany through all the guises he assumed.

^{*} Herod had invited him to an entertainment at Jericho, and when, after dinner, several of his attendants bathed themselves in a fish-pond, Aristobulus was prevailed upon to bear them company; but no sooner was he plunged into the water, than those that were in it before, according as they were directed by Herod, ducked and dipped him, hv way of sport and play, as they pretended, so long under water, that at length he was actually drowned.— Joseph. Antiq.

[†] This prosecution, however, gave rise to another tragedy in Herod's family. For when Herod was summoned to appear before Anthony, apprehensive of the event, he left directions with his uncle Joseph, who had married his sister Salome, to put Mariamne, his beloved wife, to death, if he should be condemned; fearing lest Anthony, who admired her even upon the fame of her beauty, might take her to himself, after his death. But Joseph imprudently divulged the secret to Mariamne, which exceedingly offended her and her mother Alexandra; and the latter plotted to fly for protection to a Roman legion, stationed near the city. Upon Herod's return, his sister Salome, the firebrand of her family, disclosed to him all that had happened, and malignantly accused her own husband Joseph, of too great familiarity with Mariamne, ready to sacrifice him to her hatred of the latter; who, being a woman of high birth, and still higher spirit, looked down on Salome as her inferior, and treated her with contempt; an offence not to be forgiven by a haughty and revengeful woman. Herod, though struck with jealousy, restrained himself through love to Mariamne, and questioned her in private about the charge. But she vindicated herself so fully. with all the persuasiveness of conscious innocence, that the king was satisfied, and asked her pardon for listening to such injurious reports; and assur-ing her of his love, pressed her to return it; but she resentfully remarked, that his conduct did not correspond with his professions, for that "if he loved her, how could he order her to be put to death, though innocent, in case Anthony should determine against him?" This imprudent declaration rekindled his jealousy, and convinced him that the charge was true; he flung her from his arms, ordered Joseph to be put to death, without admitting him into his presence; and though his love at this time restrained his rage against Mariamne, he put her mother Alexandra into custody, as the cause of all these mischiefs.—Dr Hales.

Anthony against him, was greatly perplexed how to proceed at this critical juncture; but necessity soon dictated an expedient. Persuaded that it was vain to dispute the will of the powerful Roman, he appointed his uncle Joseph regent during his absence, and set out for Laodicea.

Having on former occasions experienced the prevailing influence of gold, he provided himself with a very considerable sum, repaired with confidence to Anthony, and by means of an insinuating tongue, and that most eloquent ore, wrought upon Anthony, who exculpated him from the imputation, and gave him repeated tokens of his favour: nay, he even told Cleopatra, that it was beneath the dignity of a king to render an account of his conduct to any.

Herod having averted this danger, and secured his interest with Anthony, took his leave and returned home, where he trumpeted abroad the honours that had been conferred on him, and extolled the generous Roman above all the princes of the earth.

Soon after this transaction, the Roman state was involved in civil broils, through the competitions between Cæsar Octavianus and Anthony * for the sole possessio of empire; so that Herod could not stand as an idle spectator, after he had

received so many signal favours from the latter.

Having therefore raised a very powerful army, he marched at the head of it to the assistance of his patron; but Anthony appointed him to proceed against the Arabians, whom he deemed a false and faithless people.

In consequence of this order, he marched back with his army, and advanced into Arabia with a considerable body of horse and foot, and the natives having intelligence of his motions were ready to encounter him. An engagement ensued, and was maintained with great fury on both sides, till at length victory declared in favour of the Jews.

Herod having now appeased his enemies at home, and secured his interest abroad, returned to Judea, where he was received with esteem and respect.

Soon after this event, there happened in Judea a most disastrous earthquake, which destroyed a great number of cattle, and caused the destruction of above thirty thousand persons, who were buried in the ruins of the houses that were thrown down. The Arabians availed themselves of this calamity that had befallen the Jews; for when the latter, compelled by their distresses, sent ambassadors to sue for peace, they not only siezed and put them to death, but soon after advanced with an army against the Jews.

This change of affairs greatly dispirited the Jews, but Herod by an animated speech dispelled their fears, revived their courage, and they attacked them again, obtained a complete victory, and forced them to put themselves under his protection.

CHAPTER VIII.

Herod's late success followed by the defeat of Anthony his patron at the battle of Actium.— Through jealousy, he causes the death of Hyrcanus.—Submissively applies to Cæsar, who now assumes the surname of Augustus.— Meets with a favourable reception, and is

^{*} Anthony had provoked Octavianus against him, by the wrong he had done to Octavia his sister, whom Anthony had married, and yet divorced her for the gratification of his adulterous love to Cleopatra, though Octavia was much the handsomer of the two. Anthony had likewise given out that Cleopatra had been married to Julius Cæsar, and that Cæsarion, whom she had by him, was his lawful son, and consequently, had the proper right to the inheritance, which Octavianus held only as his adopted son. These things were objected against Anthony; and Anthony, by his agents and letters, was not forgetful to recriminate. But these things were no more than pretences; the true reason of their disagreement was, that both these great men, being not contented with half of the Roman empire, were each resolved to have all, and accordingly agreed to throw the die of war for it.—Plutarch de Antonio, and Prideaux's Connection.

confirmed in the government of Judea.—
Greatly perplexed by domestic grievances on his return.—Attends Cæsar a second time.—
Procures the death of Marianne.—His horiors of conscience consequent thereupon.—Is seized with a terrible disease.—Erects a most magnificent temple on his recovery, which is the last memorable occurrence in the history of the Jews previous to the incarnation of the blessed Jesus.

The late victory highly gratified the ambitious Herod, but this sunshine of prosperity was soon eclipsed by a disaster that had well nigh ruined all his hopes; for Anthony having been defeated at the memorable battle of Actium,* by his com-

* Anthony and Cæsar, as soon as the season would admit, took the field both by sea and land, The two fleets entered the Ambracian gulf in Epirus. Anthony's bravest and most experienced officers advised him not to bazard a battle by sea, to send back Cleopatra into Egypt, and to make all possible haste into Thrace or Macedonia, in order to fight there by land; because his army, composed of good troops, and much superior in numbers to Cæsar's, seemed to promise him the victory; whereas a fleet so ill manned as his, how numerous soever it might be, was by no means to be relied on. But Anthony had not been susceptible of good advice for a long time, and had acted only to please Cleopatra. That proud princess, who judged of things solely from appearances, believed her fleet invincible, and that Cæsar's ships could not approach it without being dashed to pieces. Besides, she rightly perceived that in case of misfortune it would be easier for her to escape in her ships than by land. Her opinion, therefore, took place against the advice of all the generals. The battle was fought upon the second of September, at the mouth of the gulf of Ambracia, near the city of Actium, in sight of both the land armies; the one of which was drawn up in battle upon the north, and the other upon the south of that strait, expecting the event. The contest was doubtful for some time, and seemed as much in favour of Anthony as Cæsar, till the retreat of Cleopatra. That queen, frightened with the noise of the battle, in which every thing was terrible to a woman, took to flight when she was in no danger, and drew after her the whole Egyptian squadron, which consisted of sixty ships of the line; with which she sailed for the coast of Peloponnesus. Anthony, who saw her fly, forgetting every thing, forgetting even himself, followed her precipitately, and yielded a victory to Cæsar, which, till then, he had exceedingly well disputed. It however, cost the victor extremely dear. For Anthony's ships fought so well after his departure, that, though the battle began before noon, it was not over when night came on; so that Cæsar's troops were obliged to pass it on board their ships. The next day Cæsar, seeing his victory complete, detached a squadron in pursuit of Anthony and

petitor, Cæsar Octavianus; he was under the most alarming apprehensions, lest the conqueror should deprive him of his kingdom, for having espoused the cause of Anthony.

This consideration excited his jealousy, and reflecting that Hyrcanus was living, and that he was the only one of the blood royal, he determined to put an end at once to his life and his own fears. While he was ruminating on this horrid design, the family of Hyrcanus furnished him with an opportunity of executing his resolution.

Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus, seeing her father careless, and unconcerned at the miseries of his family, represented to him the disgrace of suffering the indignities which Herod put upon them, and advised him to apply to Malchus, king of Arabia, who would not fail to assist him; adding, that if Cæsar should call Herod to account for his former friendship to Anthony, which might reasonably be expected, the crown would certainly devolve to him. Hyrcanus at first turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of his daughter, but her importunity at length prevailed, and she wrote letters to Malchus, which he sent by Dositheus, whom he thought he had secured in his interest; but the traitor betraved him to Herod.

The king, to render the design of Herod more open to the world, enjoined Dositheus to silence, bade him carry the letter to Malchus, who would not fail to give him an answer, which when he had got, he ordered to be brought to him.

Cleopatra. But that squadron despairing of ever coming up with them, because so far before it, soon returned to join the main body of the fleet. Anthony having entered the admiral-galley, in which Cleopatra was, went and sat down at the head of it; where, leaning his elbows on his knees, and supporting his head with his two hands, he remained like a man overwhelmed with shame and rage; reflecting with profound melancholy upon his ill conduct, and the misfortunes it had brought upon him. He kept in that posture, and in these gloomy thoughts, during the three days they were going to Tænarus, without seeing or speaking to Cleopatra. At the end of that time, they saw each other again, and lived together as usual.—Rollin.

Dositheus hastened to Malchus; and having delivered Hyrcanus's letter, received an answer, which he immediately brought back to Herod, who sending for him, charged him with holding a correspondence with the king of Arabia; and upon his denial, produced the letter of Malchus. Hyrcanus being thus self-condemned, he caused him to be put to death in the eighty-first year of his age.

Having thus obviated all ground of suspicion on this quarter, Herod prepared to wait on Cæsar, who, with the assent of the senate and people of Rome, had assumed the title of Emperor, and surname of Augustus; the form of government having been legally changed from a republic into a monarchy. Though he had no ground to expect any indulgence from the emperor, he determined to apply to him: but lest his mother-in-law, Alexandra, might in his absence occasion some tumult, he committed the care of the government to his brother Pheroras, and secured his mother and Mariamne his wife in such a manner as to prevent any quarrels that might arise between them, placing over them Sohemus, a trusty Idumean, with orders to put them to death, if Augustus should treat him harshly.

After these necessary precautions, he hastened to Rhodes to meet Augustus, where, upon his arrival, in due deference to the emperor, he took off his crown, and laid it aside. He was received with great courtesy, and emboldened thereby, frankly represented to Cæsar, that he had retained a friendship for Anthony, assisted him with money and provisions, and was ready to sacrifice his life and fortune in his interest; but as the face of affairs was changed, he would serve him in as unfeigned and unreserved a manner as he had done the other.

This address, so concise and pertinent, wrought so effectually upon Augustus, that he desired him to resume his crown, confirmed him in his kingdom of Judea,

Dositheus hastened to Malchus; and and received him into his immediate ving delivered Hyrcanus's letter, reived an answer, which he immediately ought back to Herod, who sending for m, charged him with holding a corresm, charged him with holding a corres-

Having thus obtained the favour and interest of the greatest monarch upon earth, he returned to Judea, loaded with honour and power, to the astonishment of the people, who expected from this interview a very different turn of affairs.

Herod now found that great disorders prevailed in his family, through the instigation of his wife and mother, who were so incensed at their confinement, that they reproached him to his face, especially Mariamne, who not only received him with coldness and sadness, but upbraided him with his cruel design upon her life.

This aversion tortured the mind of Herod, and ambition dictated revenge; but love interceded in her behalf; and jealousy and love thus agitating his disturbed mind, his hatred at length prevailed, and he had determined something fatal against Mariamne, if an accident had not prevented his purpose.

Hearing of the death of Anthony and Cleopatra,* and that Augustus was pos-

^{*} After the battle of Actium, Anthony and Cleopatra both returned to Alexandria, and it was not long before Octavianus went in pursuit of them. On their first coming, Anthony fell upon the Roman troops, while under the fatigue of their march, and put them to a total rout; but, in a second engagement with them, he was vanquished, and driven back into the city with great loss. The next morning, when he went down to the harbour to put the fleet in order to engage the enemy, no sooner were they drawn up in line of battle, but he saw them desert, and go over to them, and, (to his greater mortification.) when he returned into the city, he found that all the land forces, both horse and foot, had in like manner revolted from him. When Anthony understood that all this was done by Cleopatra's treachery, and in hopes of making her peace with Octavianus, he could not forbear expressing his resentment of it in loud complaints; so that Cleopatra, for fear of him, but (as she pretended) to secure herself from the enemy, fled to a monument, which she caused to be built of a great height, and wonderful structure, and having there shut herself up with two maids, and one eunuch, she had it given out that she was dead. Anthony

sessed of all Egypt, he was obliged once by bribing Herod's cupbearer to tell more to attend him. Therefore committing the care of his family to Sohemus, and vesting him with the government of part of Judea in his absence, he departed, and was honourably received by Cæsar, who conferred on him additional favours, adding to his a ng lom several places on the continent as well as on the coast.

When he had waited upon Cæsar, as far as Antioch, he returned to Jerusalem, where having wasted a year without being able to pacify his queen, he determined to chastise her at the expense of his own peace. As he had no just pretence for proceeding against her, his sister furnished him with an accusation to take her off,

no sooner heard the news, but, supposing it to be true, fell upon his sword; however, having intelligence, some time after, that Cleopatra was still alive, he ordered those about him to carry him to her monument, where might be seen one of the most deplorable spectacles that can be imagined. Anthony, all over bloody, and breathing out his last, was by the hands of Cleopatra, and her two maids, drawn up by the ropes and pulleys, that were employed in the building, to the top of the monument, and there, in a few moments, expired in her arms. After the death of Anthony, the great care of Octavianus was, to make himself master of Cleopatra's person and riches; of her person, to adorn his triumph; and of her riches, to defray the expenses of the war: but, after he had luckily compassed both, she, having private notice given her, of her being designed to be carried to Rome, to make part of the show in her conqueror's triumph, caused herself to be bitten by an asp, and so, to avoid this infamy, died after she had reigned, from the death of her father, twenty two years, and lived thirty-nine. Octavianus, though much concerned for having thus lost the chief glory of his triumph, did nevertheless make for Cleopatra (as he had permitted her to make for Anthony) a splendid and royal funeral. He had them both reposited in the same monument, which they had begun, and gave orders to have it finished. Having thus settled his affairs in Egypt, and cut off all those from whom he might expect any fresh disturbances, he made a review of the several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and the isles adjoining, and so, passing through Greece, returned to Rome, where he triumphed for three days successively, for his victories over the Dalmatians, and for the sea-fight at Actium, and for the conquest of Egypt; in the last of which, were led before him, the children of Cleopatra, and though herself had escaped that fate, her effigy was carried in procession, with an asp hanging at her arm, to denote the manner of her death. - Stackhouse.

him that the queen had corrupted him to poison him.

Upon this, Herod, calling a council of friends only, accused her of a design to take him off, and being now determined in his revenge, upbraided her in the vilest terms, to the general disapprobation of the assembly.

After many struggles between conscience and passion, he commanded her to be put to death, and the queen received her doom with all the composure of conscious innocence, and with that intrepid resolution, which virtue alone can inspire, placidly submitted to the fatal stroke.*

His very soul was now possessed with all the horrors of guilt; he called upon her name, but his cruelty had deprived her of the power of answering; his griefs would admit of no allay; the pursuit of glory ceased to be his delight; he supinely neglected his government, and was wholly absorbed in his sorrows. In vain did friends invent amusements to divert him; all sense of pleasure was banished, and nothing remained but sad despair.

While the king was in this state of anxiety, a pestilence raged in Jerusalem, which swept away numbers of people of all ranks and degrees, and was looked upon as the just judgment of God for the murder of the innocent queen.

The king, overwhelmed with grief, went into retirement, where in a few days he was siezed with a dangerous disorder,

^{*} Thus ended the life of the virtuous and beautiful Mariamne. In the charms and graces of her person, she excelled all the women of her time, and would have been a lady without exception, could she have carried it with some more complaisance to her husband. But, considering that he had built his fortunes on the ruin of her family; that he had usurped from them the crown which he wore; that he had caused or procured her father, her grandfather, her brother, and her uncle, to be put to death, and had twice ordered her death in case of his own, it would put difficulties upon the most patient and best tempered woman in the world, how to bear such a husband with any affection or complaisance.-Prideaux.

that baffled all the art of his physicians. I in all respects larger and more stately In this condition he languished some time, during which Alexandra attempted to possess herself of all the fortresses of Jerusalem, which when Herod heard, he commanded her to be put to death.

When he recovered from this distemper, he practised every degree of oppression and cruelty, that ambition and malice could possibly suggest, changed all the ancient laws and customs of the Jewish nation, for foreign inventions and ridiculous innovations, and, in short, incurred the ill-will and contempt of the people of Judea.

During this scene of confusion and impiety, the kingdom was afflicted with a drought, famine, and pestilence, which raged with unabated violence a considerable time; however, having obtained a grant for the exportation of corn out of Egypt, it was equally distributed among the people, to their no small relief.

This conduct of Herod in some degree restored his character, and reconciled many of the people to his person and government.

When this calamity was removed and he had recovered his health, he rebuilt a city, and erected a temple in it, which being dedicated to Augustus, he called Cæsarea.* As he had performed many famous exploits, he determined to erect a most magnificent temple + in Jerusalem,

than the former. Accordingly, having by an elaborate harangue, brought the people to consent to the undertaking of

with many rich spoils, which the kings of the Jews had dedicated to God as the monuments of their victories. The middle of it, which was much higher than the two extremes, afforded a very agreeable prospect to the extent of several furlongs to those that either lived in the country, or were travelling to the city. The gate of it was a very curious piece of workmanship. From the top of it hung a variety of rich tapestry of several colours, embellished with purple flowers. On each side of it stood a stately pillar, with a golden vine creeping and twining about it, whose branches were laden with a cluster of grapes, that hung dangling down from the cornices. Round about the temple were large galleries, answerable to the rest of the work in magnificence, and in beauty much exceeding all that had been before. The temple was surrounded by three courts or enclosures. The first enclosure, which was a square of a furlong on every side, had a gate on the east, another on the south, and another on the north side; but it had four towards the west; one leading to the palace, another into the city, and two more into the fields. It was secured without by a strong wall, and within was adorned with stately porticos or galleries, sustained by no less than 162 columns of Corinthian work, and all so very thick, that hardly three men could grasp one with their arms. They supported a roof of cedar very curiously wrought, and made three galleries; the two outermost of which were of the same dimensions, that is, thirty feet in breadth, fifty in height and a furlong in length; but that in the middle was half as broad again as the other, and twice as high. The court or area before these galleries was paved with marble of several colours, and, at a little distance, was a second enclosure, formed by a handsome balustrade of stone, with pillars at equal distances, whereon were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving warning to all strangers not to proceed any farther, upon pain of death. To this enclosure there was but one entrance towards the east, but towards the north, and south, at equal distances, three. In the middle of these two enclosures, there was a third, which included the temple, strictly so called, and the altar of burnt sacrifices, which was fifty cubits high, and forty cubits wide every way, all built of rough stones, on which no tool had ever been used. Into this court (which none but priests were permitted to enter) there were nine gates; one towards the east, four towards the south, and as many towards the north; but towards the west there was no gate, only one great wall ran all along from north to south. At the entrance of each gate within were large rooms in form of pavilions, of thirty cubits square, and forty high, supported by a pillar of eighteen feet in circumference; and the whole adorned with porticos, sustained by two rows of pillars, to the east, north, and south, but towards the west there was nothing but the wall just now mentioned. This is the

^{*} Its former appellation was the tower of Straton. It stood by the sea-side, on the coasts of Phænicia, upon the pass into Egypt, and was very convenient for trade, but that it had a bad harbour. To remedy this therefore, he ordered a mole to be made in the form of a half-moon, and large enough for a royal navy to ride in. 'The buildings of the town were all of marble, private houses as well as palaces, but the master-piece of all was the port; whereof we meet with a description in Josephus's Antiq. lib. xv. c. 13.

+ Whatever some Jewish Rabbins may tell us,

it is certain that the temple of Herod was widely different from that of Solomon's, and from that which was built by Zerubbabel after the captivity: for the description of it, according to Josephus, who himself had seen it, is much to this purpose. -The front of this magnificent building, which resembled that of a royal palace, was adorned

so arduous a work, it was accomplished in about nine years and six months, and dedicated with all the usual forms and solemnities.

This is the last remarkable occurrence in the history of the Jews previous to the incarnation of the blessed Jesus, except the extraordinary appearance of the angel Gabriel to Zachariah the priest, and the Holy Virgin; the particulars of which circumstances being related at large in our

description of the temple, as it was repaired by Herod, that may be extracted from Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 13. but whoever is desirous to know these things more minutely, must consult those authors that have wrote upon them ex professo: among whom Beausobre and Lenfant, in their general preface to the New Testament, have given us no bad sketch; and Jurieu, in his Hist. des Dogmes, &c. has rectified some mistakes in the account of Josephus, Part ii. c. 4.

* As the last days of Herod were marked by crimes of atrocious turpitude, so the circumstances attending his death were awful, almost beyond expression. A report being one day spread that he was deceased, some young people testified their exultation by throwing down a golden eagle which had by his order been placed over the great portal of the temple, contrary to the law and custom of the Jews. The supposed authors of this exploit, with forty of their disciples, were seized by Herod's order, and burnt alive! In the meantime his bodily complaints daily increased; a violent fever attacked him, accompanied by a strong hectic, which gradually consumed his vitals. His hunger became insatiable; and his bowels ulcerated, which

so arduous a work, it was accomplished in introduction to the life of Christ, are about nine years and six months, and dedi-omitted in this place.

Such was the state of the Jews at this memorable period of time, which, according to the best chronologers, fell out in the year of the world 4004, when Angustus Cæsar was emperor of Rome, and Herod, under the Roman state, had governed the kingdom of Judea about thirty-four years.*

racked him with excruciating pains. His legs swelled like a person that is dropsical—and to complete the loathsome picture, worms are said to have bred in his putrid flesh, and crawled out of his ulcerated bowels, while an insupportable itching pervaded his whole body, in which state he languished some days and then expired. When he found himself dying, he commanded all the principal persons in Judea to attend him at Jericho, threatening them with instant death in case of refusal. When arrived, he caused them all to be shut up in the circus, and obliged his executors to promise him, as soon as he was dead, they would massacre the whole of them, that so the Jews throughout the kingdom, might, at least in appearance, put on mourning for him. But this inhuman order was never executed. Five days before his death, he gave orders to have his own son An-tipater, who had been detected in a conspiracy against him, put to death, which was accordingly done. He then revoked his will, and gave the kingdom of Judea to Archelaus; the country of Auranitis, Trachonitis, and Batanea to Philip the brother of Archelaus; and Galilee and Peræa to Herod Antipas, Luke iii. 1. He died at the age of seventy-six, having reigned about thirty-four years .- Jones.

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK XI.

THE LIFE OF JOB, WITH REMARKS PRACTICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

As the account of Job refers not to any particular branch of the sacred history, and it was deemed most expedient to carry on the relation with as great a regard to the connection of the respective circumstances as possible, we could not insert it in the order in which it stands in the Bible, without interrupting the regular plan; and therefore presume it most proper thus to present it to our readers.

VARIOUS have been the conjectures of learned men concerning the person of Job, whom some suppose to have been descended from Nahor, the son of Terah, and brother of Abraham, while others derive his origin from Esau, imagining him to have been Jobab, his great-grandson. But the most probable notion is, that he sprung from Abraham, by Keturah his second wife; as he is said to have been the greatest and most considerable man for opulence of all the inhabitants of the East, into which country Abraham sent his son by Keturah.

That Job lived before the law, may be gathered from his offering burnt-offerings in the land where he resided; which offerings were forbidden in any other place, than that which the Lord should

That he lived over Jacob is evident, from the character given him by God, 'That there was none like him on earth, for uprightness and the fear of God.'*

* Although the precise time in which Job lived is uncertain, the book which goes under his name informs us particularly in what land he lived, namely, in Uz, or Uts, which, according to Dr Good, and several other learned men, is situated in Arabia Petræa, on the south-western coast of the lake Asphaltites, in a line between Egypt and Philistia, surrounded with Kedar, Teman, and Midian; all of which were districts of Arabia Petræa; situated in Idumea, the land of Edom or Esau; and comprising so large a part of it, that Idumea and Ausitis, or the land of Uz, and the land of Edom, were convertible terms, and equally employed to import the same region : thus, Lam. iv. 21: Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz.' Nothing is clearer than that all the persons introduced into this poem were Idumeans, dwelling in Idu mea; or, in other words, Edomite Arabs. These characters are, Job himself, dwelling in the land of Uz; Eliphaz of Teman, a district of as much repute as Uz, and (upon the joint testimony of Jer. xlix. 7, 20. Ezek. xxv. 13. Amos i. 11, 12. and Obadiah ver. 8, 9) a part, and a principal part, of Idumea; Bildad of Shuah, always mentioned in conjunction with Sheba and Dedan, all of them being uniformly placed in the vicinity of Idumea; Zophar of Naamah, a city whose name imports pleasantness, which is also stated, in Josh. xv. 21, 41. to have been situated in Idumea, and to have lain in a southern direction towards its coast, or the shores of the Red sea; and Elihu of Buz. which as the name of a place occurs but once in sacred writ, but is there (Jer. xxv. 22) mentioned in conjunction with Teman and Dedan; and hence necessarily, like themselves, a border city upon Ausitis, Uz, or Idumea. It had a number choose in some one of the tribes of Israel. of names : it was at first called Horitis, from the

Upon the whole, though the precise time of Job's birth cannot be ascertained; yet there is an almost general concurrence amongst commentators, that he lived in the time of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt; some placing his birth in the same year in which Jacob went down into Egypt, and dating the beginning of his trials in the year that Joseph died, being the twenty-first of Job's life.

Nor are there fewer opinions concerning the time of writing this history; some affirming that it was written after the death of Moses, who by others is supposed to have been the author of it.* How-

Horim or Horites, who appear to have first settled there. Among the descendants of these, the most distinguished was Seir; and from him the land was known by the name of the Land of Seir. This chief had a numerous family, and among the most signalized of his grandsons was Uz, or Uts; and from him, and not from Uz the son of Nahor, it seems to have been called Austits, or the Land of Uz. The family of Hor, Seir, or Uz, were at length dispossessed of the entire region by Esau, or Edom; who strengthened himself by his marriage with one of the daughters of Ishmael; and the conquered territory was denominated Idumea, or the land of Edom.—Dr Good.

* We have sufficient ground to conclude that this book was not the production of Moses, but of some earlier age. Bishop Lowth favours the opinion of Schultens, Peters, and others (which is also adopted by Bishop Tomline and Dr Hales,) who suppose Job himself, or some contemporary, to have been the author of this poem : and there seems to be no good reason for supposing that it was not written by Job himself. It appears, indeed, highly probable that Job was the writer of his own story, of whose inspiration we have the clearest evidence in the forty-second chapter of this book, in which he thus addresses the Almighty:—' I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee.' (xlii. 5.) It is plain that in this passage some privilege is intended which he never had enjoyed before, and which he calls the sight of God. He had heard of him by the 'hearing of the ear,' or the tradition delivered down to him from his forefathers, but he now had a clear and sensible perception of his being and divine perfections, -some light thrown in upon his mind which carried its own evidence, and of which, perhaps, we can form no notion, because we have never felt it, but which to him had all the certainty and clearness even of sight itself,-some manifestations of the Deity made to him in vision, such as the prophets had, and from which they derived their very name of seers. If we allow Job himself to have been the writer of the book, two important advantages will be evidently obtained :-First, all objections to historical truth will vanish

Upon the whole, though the precise ever, who was the compiler is a matter of no real importance; the book of Job gives there is an almost general concurrence nongst commentators, that he lived in patriarchal religion. The reality of his

at once: no one could tell us his own story so well as Job, nor have we any reason to question its veracity. The dialogue, too, will then appear to have been the substance of a real conversation, for no dialogue was ever more natural. If the story be told us in verse, or in the prophetic style and language, as the first of these was a practice of the highest antiquity, the other adds the most sacred and unquestionable authority to it : so that neither truth nor ornament is here wanting, any more than dignity of subject, to render this book of inestimable value. The second advantage alluded to is this,—that if Job himself were the writer of the book, then every point of history and every doctrine of religion here treated of, which coincide with those delivered in the books of Moses, are an additional proof and confirmation of the latter, as being evidently derived from some other source, not borrowed from the Pentateuch. "But whether," says Magee, "we suppose Job the author of the book, or not, its great antiquity, and even its priority to the age of Moses, seems to stand on strong grounds. And, upon the whole, perhaps we may not unreasonably conjecture the history of the book to be this :- The poem, being originally written either by Job, or some contemporary of his, and existing in the time of Moses, might fall into his hands, whilst residing in the land of Midian, or afterwards when in the neighbourhood of Idumea; and might naturally be made use of by him, to represent to the Hebrews, either whilst repining under their Egyptian bondage, or murmuring at their long wanderings in the wilderness, the great duty of submission to the will of God. encouragement which this book holds out, that every good man suffering patiently will finally be rewarded, rendered it a work peculiarly calculated to minister mingled comfort and rebuke to the distressed and discontented Israelites, and might, therefore, well have been employed by Moses for. this purpose. We may also suppose, that Moses, in transcribing, might have made some small and unimportant alterations, which will sufficiently acexpression between it and the Pentateuch, if any such there be. This hypothesis both furnishes a reasonable compromise between the opinions of the great critics, who are divided upon the point of Moses being the author; and supplies an answer to a question of no small difficulty, which hangs upon almost every other solution; namely, when, and wherefore, a book treating manifestly of the concerns of a stranger, and in no way con ! nected with their affairs, was received by the Jews into their sacred canon? For Moses having thus applied the book to their use, and sanctioned it by his authority, it would naturally have been enrolled among their sacred writings: and from the anti-quity of that enrolment, no record would consequently appear of its introduction." Indeed, it is difficult to account for its introduction into the canon of the Jewish scriptures on any other sup

person, the eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his preceding and subsequent felicity are allowed by all divines.

Some learned men, indeed, and amongst the rest Grotius and Le Clerc, imagine that this noble performance was written about a thousand years after the time in which Job lived, namely, in or near the period of the Babylonish captivity, alleging the frequent Chaldaic expressions that occur in it, that some passages are taken from the Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes; that there are more than a hundred words, partly Syriac, partly Arabic, that are not to be found in other parts of scripture; which are all signs that the author lived in the latter time, when many words borrowed from the idioms of the neighbouring nations were admitted into the Hebrew.

It is one mark of the simplicity of very ancient times, that in the inventory of Job's estate, no mention is made of money, but only of oxen, sheep, camels, asses, and servants, Grotius likewise observes, that there is no mention in the book of Job of any law, or religious rites, but such as were traditional, nor of any points of history, nor any idolatrous practices, but such as were of the more ancient times before the Mosaic institution.

Schultens, an author versed in the oriental languages, affirms, that the style of this book hath all the marks of a most venerable and remote antiquity. Job is also honourably mentioned with Noah and Daniel, Ezek. xiv. 12—20. From these remarks, it may not be unnecessary, previous to our entrance on the particulars of the history, to observe,

1st. That he was, as well as they, a

position than that it was written by a Hebrew; since the language is Hebrew, and it is written in the style of Hebrew poetry. "The Hebrews were jealous of their religious prerogatives. Would they have admitted into their sacred volume a poem written by a foreigner? The supposition that the original author travelled or resided a considerable time in Arabia will account for the Arabian images and words contained in it."—Horne.

person of distinguished piety. 2d. That he was well known, and celebrated as such amongst the Jews, to whom Ezekiel's prophecy was directed. 3d. That he must either have been of the seed of Israel, or like Noah, of the patriarchal times; otherwise the Jews, separated from, and raised in spiritual privileges above all other nations, would never have proposed to themselves one of their Gentile, uncircumcised neighbours, of whom they had a mean opinion, as an example of the greatest piety, nor have admitted his history into their canon. If he was of the patriarchal times, he must have been at the distance of about a thousand years before Ezekiel.

Mere oral tradition of such a person could not have subsisted through so long a space of time without appearing at last as uncertain or fabulous.* There must

^{*} Although this book professes to treat of a real person, yet the actual existence of the patriarch has been questioned by many eminent critics, who have endeavoured to prove that the whole poem is a mere fictitious narration, intended to instruct through the medium of parable. This opinion was first announced by the celebrated Jewish Rabbi Maimonides, and has since been adopted by Le Clerc, Michaelis, Semler, Bishop Stock, and others. The reality of Job's existence, on the contrary, (independently of its being the uniform belief of the Jewish and Christian church,) has been maintained with equal ability by Leusden, Calmet, Heidegger, Carpzov, Van Til, Spanheim, Moldenhawer, Schultens, Ilgen, Archbishop Magee, Bishops Patrick, Sherlock, Lowth, Tomline, and Gray, Drs Kennicott and Hales, Messieurs Peters and Good, Drs Taylor and Priestley, and, in short, by almost every other modern commentator and critic. The principal arguments commonly urged against the reality of Job's existence are derived from the nature of the exordium in which Satan appears as the accuser of Job; from the tempta-tions and sufferings permitted by the Almighty Governor of the world to befall an upright character; from the artificial regularity of the numbers by which the patriarch's possessions are described, as seven thousand, three thousand, one thousand, five hundred, &c. With regard to the first argument, the incredibility of the conversation which is related to have taken place between the Al-mighty and Satan, "who is supposed to return with news from the terrestrial regions,"-an able commentator has remarked, Why should such as conversation be supposed incredible? The attempt at wit in the word news is somewhat out of place; for the interrogation of the Almighty, 'Hast thou fixed thy view upon my servant Job, a perfect and upright man?' (i. 8.) instead of aiming at the acquisition of news, is intended as a se-

therefore have been some history of Job, was ever heard of or pretended; this must in Ezekiel's time; no other history but then have been generally known, and read that which we now have, and which has as true and authentic, and consequently always had a place in the Hebrew code, must have been written near to the age

vere and most appropriate sarcasm upon the fallen spirit. "Hast thou,-who, with superior faculties and a more comprehensive knowledge of my will, hast not continued perfect and upright,-fixed thy view upon a subordinate being, far weaker and less informed than thyself, who has continued so?"-The attendance of the apostate at the tribunal of the Almighty is plainly designed to show us that good and evil angels are equally amenable to him, and equally subject to his authority ;- a doctrine common to every part of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, and, except in the mythology of the Parsees, recognised by, perhaps, every ancient system of religion whatever. The part assigned to Satan in the present work is that expressly assigned to him in the case of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and of our Saviour in the wilderness; and which is assigned to him generally, in regard to mankind at large, by all the evangelists and apostles whose writings have reached us, both in their strictest historical narratives, and closest argumentative inductions. And hence the argument which should induce us to regard the present passage as fabulous, should induce us to regard all the rest in the same light which are imbued with the same doctrine :- a view of the subject which would sweep into nothingness a much larger portion of the Bible than, we are confident, M. Michaelis would choose to part with. The other arguments are, comparatively, of small moment. We want not fable to tell us that good and upright men may occasionally become the victims of accumulated calamities; for it is a living fact, which, in the mystery of Providence, is perpetually occurring in every country: while as to the roundness of the numbers by which the patriarch's possessions are described, nothing could have been more ungraceful or superfluous than for the poet to have descended to units, had even the literal numeration demanded it. And although he is stated to have lived a hundred and forty years after his restoration to prosperity, and in an era in which the duration of man did not, perhaps, much exceed that of the present day, it should be recollected, that in his person as well as in his property he was specially gifted by the Almighty: that, from various passages, he seems to have been younger than all the interlocutors, except Elihu, and much younger than one or two of them: that his longevity is particularly remarked, as though of more than usual extent: and that, even in the present age of the world, we have well authenticated instances of persons having lived, in different parts of the globe, to the age of a hundred and fifty, a hundred and sixty, and even a hundred and seventy It is not necessary for the historical truth of the book of Job, that its language should be a direct transcript of that actually employed by the different characters introduced into it; for in such case we should scarcely have a single book of real history in the world. The Iliad, the Shah Nameh, and the Lusiad, must at once drop all pretensions

to such a description; and even the pages of Sallust and Cæsar, of Rollin and Hume, must stand upon very questionable authority. It is enough that the real sentiment be given, and the general style copied: and this, in truth, is all that is aimed at, not only in our best reports of parliamentary speeches, but in many instances (which is indeed much more to the purpose,) by the writers of the New Testament, in their quotations from the Old. Independently of these considerations, which we think sufficiently refute the objections adduced against the reality of Job's existence, we may observe, that there is every possible evidence that the book, which bears his name, contains a literal history of the temptations and sufferings of a real In the first place, that Job was a real, character. and not a fictitious character, may be inferred from the manner in which he is mentioned in the scriptures. Thus, the prophet Ezekiel speaks of him :-'Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.' (Ezek. xiv. 14.) In this passage the prophet ranks Noah, Daniel, and Job, together, as powerful intercessors with God; the first for his family; the second for the wise men of Babylon; and the third for his friends; now since Neah and Daniel were the friends: now, since Noah and Daniel were unquestionably real characters, we must conclude the same of Job. 'Behold,'says the apostle James, 'we count them happy which endure: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy,' (James v. 11.) It is scarcely to be believed that a divinely inspired apostle would refer to an imaginary character as an example of patience, or in proof of the mercy of God. But, besides the authority of the inspired writers, we have the strongest internal evidence, from the book itself, that Job was a real person: for it expressly specifies the names of persons, places, facts, and other circumstances usually related in true histo-Thus we have the name, country, piety, wealth, &c. of Job described (ch. i.;) the names, number, and acts of his children are mentioned; the conduct of his wife is recorded as a fact (ii.;) his friends, their names, countries, and discourses with him in his afflictions, are minutely delineated, (ii. 11. &c.) And can we rationally imagine that these were not realities? Further, no reasonable doubt can be entertained respecting the real existence of Job, when we consider that it is proved by the concurrent testimony of all Eastern tradition: he is mentioned by the author of the book of Tobit, who lived during the Assyrian captivity; he is also repeatedly mentioned by Mohammed as a real character. The whole of his history, with many fabulous additions, was known among the Syrians and Chaldeans; many of the noblest families among the Arabians are distinguished by his name, and boast of being descended from him. late even as the end of the fourth century, we are told, that there were many persons who went into

in which the fact was transacted, and not in future times when its credibility would have been greatly diminished.

In short, if we should affirm that the book of Job is one of the oldest and noblest books extant, we should have the vote of the best critics, and the frame of the book would justify the assertion.*

Arabia to see Job's dunghill, which, in the nature of things, could not have subsisted through so many ages; but the fact of superstitious persons making pilgrimages to it sufficiently attests the reality of his existence, as also do the traditionary accounts concerning the place of Job's abode.—Horne.

* All commentators and critics are unanimously agreed, that the poem of Job is the most ancient book extant: but concerning its species and structure there is a considerable diversity of opinion, some contending that it is an epic poem, while others maintain it to be a drama. M. Ilgen on the continent, and Dr Good in our own country, are the only two commentators that have come to the writer's knowledge, who advocate the hypothesis that the book of Job is a regular epic. The former critic contends that it is a regular epic, the subject of which is tried and victorious innocence; and that it possesses unity of action, delineation of character, plot, and catastrophe, -not exactly, indeed, in the Grecian, but in the Oriental style, Dr Good observes, that, were it necessary to enter minutely into the question, this poem might easily be proved to possess all the more prominent fea-tures of an epic, as laid down by Aristotle himself, such as unity, completion, and grandeur in its action; loftiness in its sentiments and language; multitude and variety in the passions which it developes. Even the characters, though not numerous, are discriminated and well supported; the milder and more modest temper of Eliphaz (compare Job iv. 2, 3. with xv. 3.) is well contrasted with the forward and unrestrained violence of Bildad; the terseness and brevity of Zophar with the pent-up and overflowing fulness of Elihu: while in Job himself we perceive a dignity of mind that nothing can humiliate, a firmness that nothing can subdue, still habitually disclosing themselves amidst the tumult of hope, fear, rage, tenderness, triumph, and despair, with which he is alternately distract-This hint is offered by Dr Good, not with a view of ascribing any additional merit to the poem itself, but merely to observe, so far as a single fact is possessed of authority, that mental taste, or the internal discernment of real beauty, is the same in all ages and nations, and that the rules of the Greek critic are deduced from a principle of universal impulse and operation. The dramatic form of this poem was strenuously affirmed by Calmet, Carpzov, and some other continental critics, and after them by Dr Garnett, and Bishop Warburton; who, in support of this opinion, adduced the metrical form of its style, excepting in the introduction and conclusion,-its sentiments, which are delivered, not only in verse, but in a kind of poetry animated by all the sublimity and floridness of description (whence he concludes this book to be a

Job was a prince of the greatest eminence, wealth, and authority among the people of the East; his stock was immense, consisting of seven thousand sheep, three

work of imagination,)—and, in short, the whole form of its composition. Bishop Lowth has appropriated two entire lectures to an examination of this question; and after inquiring whether the poem is possessed of any of the properties of the Greek drama, and considering a variety of circumstances which are here necessarily omitted, he affirms, without hesitation, that the poem of Job contains no plot or action whatever, not even of the most simple kind; that it uniformly exhibits one constant chain of things, without the smallest change of feature from beginning to end; and that it exhibits such a representation of manners, passions, and sentiments as might be naturally expected in such a situation. But though the book of Job is by no means to be considered as a drama written with fictitious contrivance; or as resembling in its construction any of those much admired productions of the Grecian dramatic poets which it preceded by so many centuries,-yet, he concludes, it may still be represented as being so far dramatic, as the parties are introduced speaking with great fidelity of character; and as it deviates from strict historical accuracy for the sake of effect. It is a complete though peculiar work, and regular in its subject as well as in the distribution of its parts: the exordium and conclusion are in prose, but all the intermediate dialogues are in metre. But, whatever rank may be assigned to Job in a comparison with the poets of Greece, to whom we must at least allow the merit of art and method; among the Hebrews it must certainly be allowed, in this respect, to be unrivalled. Such is a brief outline of Bishop Lowth's arguments and conclusions, which have been generally adopted. It only remains that we notice the opinion of Professor Bauer, viz. that the book of Job approximates most nearly to the Mekamat or moral discourses of the philosophical Arabian poets. He has simply announced his hypothesis, without offering any reasons in its support; but the following considerations appear not unfavourable to the conjecture of Bauer. The Mekama treats on every topic which presented itself to the mind of the poet, and though some parts are occasionally found in prose, yet it is generally clothed in all the charms of poetry which the vivid imagination of the author could possibly bestow upon it. The subjects thus discussed, however, are principally ethical. The Arabs have several works of this description, which are of considerable antiquity; but the most cele brated is the collection of Mekamats, composed by the illustrious poet Hariri, which are read and admired to this day. Now, it will be recollected, that the scene of the book of Job is laid in the land of Uz or Idumea, in the Stony Arabia; the interlocutors are Edomite Arabs; the beginning and termination are evidently in prose, though the dialogue is metrical; the language is pure Hebrew which we know for a considerable time was the common dialect of the Israelites, Idumeans, and Arabs, who were all descended from Abraham; the manners, customs, and allusions, too, which, it

thousand camels, five hundred yokes of Lord, at which time also Satan their adoxen and five hundred she-asses. He had seven sons and three daughters, who perhaps inherited many of the virtues of their father. His prudent and exemplary deportment, combined with his pious instructions, no doubt tended in a considerable degree to preserve them from the contaminating influence of vicious pleasures. And even when secluded from his paternal roof, we find the same assiduity exerted for their spiritual welfare. when they, according to the oriental custom, had assembled to celebrate any of their birthdays, which were held with much festivity and rejoicing, the attentive patriarch, rising betimes on the following morning, would offer burnt-offerings for them according to their number.

This pious care of Job obtained the approbation of the Almighty, who expressed his esteem of the same at a time when the sons of God, that is, the angels, came to present themselves before the

is well known, have not varied in any material degree, are supported by those of the modern Arabs. Since, then, the book of Job is allowed on all sides to be a poem, single and unparalleled in the sacred volume, may we not consider it as a prototype of the Mekama of the Arabians? This conjecture, which is offered with deference to the names and sentiments of so many learned men, possesses at least one advantage; it furnishes a compromise between the opinions of the great critics who are divided in sentiment upon the class of poetry to which this book is to be referred, and perhaps reconciles difficulties which could not otherwise be solved respecting its real nature. The reader will now determine for himself to which class of poetry this divine book is to be referred. After all that has been said, it is, perhaps, of little consequence whether it be esteemed a didactic or an ethic, an epic or dramatic poem; provided a distinct and conspicuous station be assigned to it in the highest rank of Hebrew poesy; for not only is the poetry of the book of Job equal to that of any other of the sacred writings, but it is superior to them all, those of Isaiah alone excepted. As Isaiah, says Dr Blair, is the most sublime, David the most pleasing and tender, so Job is the most descriptive of all the inspired poets. A peculiar glow of fancy and strength of description characterize this author. No writer whatever abounds so much in metaphors. He may be said not only to describe, but to render visible, whatever he treats of. Instances of this kind every where occur, but especially in the eighteenth and twentieth chapters, in which the condition of the wicked is delineated. - Horne.

versary came among them, to seek an opportunity of doing them mischief. The Almighty, to set forth Job as an exemplary pattern of righteousness, is represented as thus interrogating the great enemy of mankind: 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a man exactly just, and one that feareth God and shunneth evil? The malignant fiend, unwilling to confess that Job served God from a truly pious principle, and arrogantly desirous of insinuating that his obedience proceeded from a motive of self-interest, is described as presumptuously replying: Doth Job serve thee for nothing? Hast thou not inclosed him on all sides, secured him, and all that he hath, from the reach of misfortune and danger: but withdraw thy protection, and suffer him to be afflicted with the loss of the vast wealth thou hast heaped upon him, and he will curse thee to thy face.'

The omniscient Jehovah, knowing the integrity of his servant, and that his example might have a pious effect upon others, exposed him to the fiery trial. 'Behold,' says he, 'all that he hath is in thy power, but presume not to touch his person.' The grand foe to the present and future happiness of mankind, who walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, having obtained this permission, set his accursed instruments to work, to tempt the good man even unto blasphemy, attacking him with a train of complicated miseries, too great in all human probability for human nature to sustain. He took an opportunity to begin his assault in the day that his eldest son was to entertain his relations. He had instigated the Sabeans, a neighbouring people descended from Sheba, grandson of Abraham by Keturah, to make an inroad upon Job's territories, which they did with such fury, that but one servant escaped to bring the unhappy news to his master, which he did in this manner:

'Thy oxen were ploughing, and the asses | that the good man might not have time feeding by them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away, and they have put all thy servants to the sword, except myself.' Job had not time to reflect with himself what might be the cause of this depredation, before this messenger was followed by another, who in the greatest consternation informed him, 'That the fire of God was fallen from heaven, and had burnt up his sheep and his servants, and consumed them all, so that he alone was escaped to tell him.'

This account was certainly very shocking, and the calamity coming from heaven, might give it the appearance of a more immediate judgment than the former; but before Job could ruminate upon the dire cause, a third messenger hastily acquainted him, 'That the Chaldeans" in three parties had fallen upon the camels, and carried them away, and put all his servants to the sword, except himself.'

Thus was Job stripped of all his substance in one day; and he who in the morning was the wealthiest man in all the East, was, before night, perhaps the most indigent creature upon earth.

The accursed fiend, however, finding this severe stroke ineffectual to accomplish his full desire upon righteous Job, determined to touch him in a more sensible part, and to come as near him as the bound prescribed by the Almighty would permit.

This prince of the air therefore, raising a very great storm, threw down the house where Job's children were regaling, and by that means destroyed them all; and

to digest his former losses, before the last

messenger had made an end of relating to

him the loss of his camels, another arrived,

and with horror related, 'That as his sons

and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the inhabitants, and they were dead, while he himself alone escaped to tell him.' This last account touched the good man in the tenderest part; the death of his † The following account by Abbé Richard, of

a whirlwind that happened in Burgundy, in the year 1755, will give some idea of the phenomena presented, and of the effects produced by this species of tempest, when it assumes its most formidable character :- "An extremely dark cloud, hanging low in the atmosphere, and driven forward by a north wind, was observed to cover the surface of the territory in which the small town of Mirabeau is situated: it occasioned very singular appearances for about a league in length, and the half of that space in breadth. Different whirlings appeared at once in this dark mass of condensed vapours; some hail fell, and thunder was heard; the quickset hedge-rows, and most of the trees in the vineyards, were rooted up; the little river of Mirabeau was carried more than sixty paces from its bed, which remained dry; two men were enveloped in the whirlwind, and carried to a distance without experiencing any injury; a young shep-herd was lifted high in the air, and thrown upon the banks of the river, yet his fall was not violent. the whirlwind having placed him on the verge where it ceased to act. In the woods within its circle its effects were traced, by finding the trees either twisted, or torn up by the roots. . Some sheep that were in the fields were enveloped and carried to a distance; several of them were killed. It unroofed the farm-houses; and after raging in this manner for half an hour, the wind shifted to the south, when the tempest immediately ceased."
The following is given by Bruce: "We had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain, when we were inclosed by a violent whirlwind, or what is called at sea the water-spout. The unfortunate camel, that had been taken by the Cohala, seemed to be nearly in the centre of its vortex. It was lifted, and thrown down at a considerable distance, and several of its ribs broken. Although, as far as I could guess, I was not near its centre, it whirled me off my feet, and threw me down on my face, so as to make my nose gush out with blood. Two of the servants likewise had the same fate.—It demolished one half of a small hut, as if it had been cut through with a knife, and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing .- Hutchison's Meteorology, and Bruce's Travels.

^{*} The Chaldeans inhabited each side of the Euphrates, near to Babylon, which was their capital. They were also mixed with the wandering Arabs, and lived like them on rapine. They were the descendants of Chesed, son of Nahor and brother of Huz, from whom they had their name Casdim, which we translate Chaldeans. They divided themselves into three bands, in order the more speedily and effectually to encompass, collect, and drive off the three thousand camels: probably they mounted the camels and rode off. -Dr A. Clarke.

him deeply, nor was the manner of their death less afflicting, considering that it happened at a time when they were un-

prepared for so awful an event.

But these repeated and aggravated calamities did not betray him into any irregularity of behaviour; the only vent he gave to his grief was rending his mantle, the common token of affliction and sorrow in those eastern countries and early ages of the world; then deliberately following the other usual customs of mourning, he shaved his head, and in humble submission fell upon the ground and worshipped.

His misery could not render him forgetful of his duty, he therefore humbled himself under the divine hand, without whose permission, he well knew, none of these misfortunes could have befallen him.

Thus, to the great disappointment of the enemy of souls, righteous Job stood the shock, and in devout acknowledgment of his own meanness cried out, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to the earth, the common womb and mother of mankind.'

Then in resignation and thankfulness for what he had received at the hand of God, though now deprived of all, he gives up all for lost in this world, and says, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

The patriarch's virtue therefore shone forth through his sufferings, which, great as they were, could not warp him from his duty and obedience to his great Creator. He well knew that it was but just, that he who gave, should have power to resume his grant whenever he pleased, and therefore, instead of cursing, as Satan had maliciously suggested he would, he blessed God for all his dispensations, and proved the falsity of Satan's declaration.

But the restless fury of the inveterate fiend would not suffer him to suspend his attacks; for when the sons of God, or as before observed, the angels, again present-

children at one stroke could not but affect | ed themselves, it pleased the Lord to signify to Satan the inflexible integrity of his servant, who, though tried in the tenderest points, would not deviate from his duty, or even repine at what he thought the dispensation of a divine providence.

> His piety, in short, appears in the midst of his trials, and his faith and resignation must be deemed most extraordinary. The old deceiver, however, artfully and maliciously observed, that God had hitherto only permitted him to try him at a distance, insinuating, that if he might be allowed to touch his person, he would still blaspheme.

> The omniscient Being, knowing that these exercises, though grievous to flesh and blood, would redound to his glory, and the real benefit of his servant, determined to arm him with patience to bear them, and in the end to recompense all his sufferings with an extraordinary reward, enlarged Satan's commission, but yet with a limitation; 'Behold, he is in thy power, but touch not his life.'

> The busy tempter, exulting in the enlargement of his power, and persuading himself of the possibility of overcoming Job's virtue, immediately fell upon him while impressed with a sense of his late losses, and afflicted him with boils and ulcers from head to foot.*

> Never was human nature more disguised than righteous Job in this condition, his

^{*} The disease with which the patriarch Job was afflicted has greatly exercised the ingenuity of commentators, who have supposed it to be the contagious leprosy, the small pox, and the elephantiasis, or leprosy of the Arabians. The last opinion is adopted by Drs Mead and Good, and by Michaelis, and appears to be best supported. This dreadful malady, which the ancient medical writer Paul of Ægineta has accurately characterised as an universal ulcer, was named elephantiasis by the Greeks, from its rendering the skin of the patient like that of an elephant, scabrous and dark coloured, and furrowed all over with tubercles, loathsome alike to the individual and to the spectators. When it attains a certain height, as it appears to have done in this instance, it is incurable, and, consequently, affords the unhappy patient no prospect but that of long-continued misery,-

body being covered with loathsome excrescences, not arising from a depraved habit of constitution, but inflicted by a malicious policy, which raised him to the highest extremity of pain, in order, if possible, to compel him to swear and blaspheme. Nor were his pains short and intermitting, but lasting and poignant, and to increase his misery, the loathsome nature of his distemper not only rendered him odious to himself, but to all others.

Thus was Job, though the greatest man in the East, of the strictest religion and virtue, the patron of the fatherless and widow, the admiration of the good, and the terror of the vicious and profane, by the divine permission and the malice of the devil, at once reduced to the most indigent and deplorable circumstances, stripped of all his substance, bereaved of all his children, seven sons and three daughters, and soon after seized with a most nauseous and painful disease from head to foot, which rendered him the most shocking spectacle of sorrow and wretchedness.

The country, so far as the fame of his religion and grandeur had spread, could not but hear his melancholy story with wonder and astonishment. The religious might be inclined to conclude, that such signal and sudden calamities could be no other than the judgments of God upon a man, who, under the mask of piety, had veiled a life of profaneness and debauchery. The wicked doubtless triumphed in his sufferings, as a justification of their own corrupt principles and practice, and a demonstration of the insignificancy of the strictest regard to God and his worship.

His relations and acquaintance, struck with horror and aversion at such a despicable, vile, and abandoned creature, would not own him. The wife of his bosom treated him with unkindness and neglect. The basest of men broke in upon him like a legion of fiends, made his afflictions their sport, treated him with all manner of indignities, calumnies, and slander, and even spared not to spit in his face.

Scarce ever were the feelings of the human heart oppressed with such a complicated load of grief; scarce ever was a profession of religion so much exposed to censure, reproach, and insult.

In this situation, as he was probably pouring out his supplications to heaven, his wife* spared not to reproach him with his preposterous goodness, in words to this effect, 'Will you bless God, when he is destroying you! Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he hath ruined your estate and family, and in spite of all your submission is slaughtering your body, and within a stroke of your life?"

But Job returned no other than a mild answer, as became a good man and an affectionate husband: 'You speak not like yourself, but as a woman void of understanding. Is it fit God should always smile upon sinful creatures? Shall we say he is not just when he brings us into affliction? We receive what pleaseth us with joy, and it is but reasonable that we receive what is ungrateful with composure and resignation; seeing both come from the same wise and sovereign Disposer of all events.'

Thus did the Almighty preserve and support this eminent servant under the loss of his estate and children, under the extremity of his pains, the desertion of his friends and relations, the neglect of his servants, and the provocation of his wife.

The steadiness of Job's mind was more

^{*} Some of the Jewish doctors imagine, that Dinah, the daughter of Leah, was this wife of Job's, but this seems to be a mere fiction. The moroseness and impiety of the woman as well as the place of her habitation, do no ways suit with Jacob's daughter: and therefore the more probable opinion is, that his wife was an Arabian by birth, and that, though the words which we render, 'Curse God and die,' may equally bear a quite contrary signification, yet they are not here to be taken in the most favourable sense, because they drew from her meek and patient husband so severe an imprecation, 'Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?'—Spanheim's History of Job.

severely tried by his three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, men of the same rank and piety, who dwelt in some of the adjacent provinces, and in whose familiarity he had probably been long happy.*

The report of his sufferings, of the ruin of his character, and the wound thereby given to religion, having reached their ears, they agreed with a sincere intention to join their endeavours in administering the only advice and consolation they apprehended his case would admit; for, as their suspicions were strong, and his calamities carried evident marks of divine infliction, they had the same opinion of them with the rest of the world, and believed they were the just judgments of God upon a hypocrite, they determined by all means to fix a sense of guilt upon his conscience, in order to bring him to true repentance, and so to a solid interest in the divine favour and blessing.

But when they were come, and had found their late flourishing, honourable, and highly esteemed friend, reduced to the state of a most loathsome and miserable wretch, that was sitting among ashes, they were astonished beyond expression, and being confirmed in their evil suspicions, though they sat with him on the ground; yet as their bad opinion of him would not allow them to say any thing comfortable and encouraging, they ke silence for several days.

The sight of his old acquaintance, an their unfavourable manner of condolence, raised his passion of sorrow to such a pitch, that it burst out into a torrent of the most bitter reflections on the day of his birth, wishing it had been struck out of the number of days, or rendered as odious and detestable to all others as it was to himself.

Upon this, Eliphaz, probably the eldest and most honourable of the three, addressed himself to Job, and in the softest manner opened their sense of his case; namely, that in their apprehensions of his case, he had been very defective in the character to which he had pretended; that great sufferings must be the punishment of great sins; and that they could recommend him to no other method of regaining his former peace and prosperity, than repentance and seeking unto God for pardon. In short, they plainly declared, that they judged he had been a very wicked man, and that his calamities were an evident indication of the divine wrath against him as such, endeavouring by that means to extort a confession of guilt from him.

But the pious though afflicted patriarch, immoveable in his sincerity to God and innocence to man, flatly denied their insinuations, and this produced a dispute between him and his friends, which, as is common in such cases, was carried on with a growing warmth and eagerness on both sides; and on both sides might occasion some expressions too strong and exaggerating.

His friends argued from experience, and what they had observed to be the usual method of divine providence, they had seen many instances of wicked men,

^{*} From the circumstance of Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad being termed kings in the Septuagint version, some critics have supposed that they as well as Job were monarchs: but this conjecture is destitute of support. For 1. Jobois not represented as losing his kingdom, but his children, servants, and flocks; 2. He possessed no army or forces with which he could pursue the predatory Sabeans and Chaldeans; 3. Though his friends accused him of various crimes, and among others of harshly treating his servants, yet they no where charge him with tyranny towards his subjects; 4. Job gives an account of his private life and conduct towards his domestics, but is totally silent as to his conduct towards his subjects; lastly, when he does men-tion kings, he by no means places himself upon an equality with them. It is equally clear that Job was not subject to any sovereign, for neither he nor his friends make any mention of his allegiance to any king; on the contrary, when he entered the gate of the city, where the magistrates sat in a judicial capacity, the first place was reserved to him, and his opinion was asked with the utmost deference. From all these circumstances, therefore, coupled with his extensive flocks and ample possessions, we conclude with Herder, Jahn, and Dr Good, that he was emir, prince, or chief magistrate of the city of Uz .- Horne.

or of those who had passed for such, remarkably punished, and hence they had formed to themselves a general maxim, that where they saw great wretchedness and the acutest sufferings, there must be crimes proportionably great.

To this Job opposed likewise observation and experience; and showed that the rule of judging they had formed to themselves was by no means right or without exception, observing that good men were sometimes afflicted, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that for the most part the good things of this life were dealt out promiscuously; that this was more especially the case in times of war and pestilence, and such other calamities, where the good and bad fell undistinguished. To all this he added, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his misery, to hear his friends, so well acquainted with him, persons of sense and distinction, charge him with crimes which his soul abhorred, and of which, God who had afflicted him knew that he was innocent.

To him he was ready to appeal, and still adhere in life and death, though he did not know why he had dealt so severely with him. So strongly did Job assert his integrity, that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to silence.

During this argument between Job and his friends, there was present one Elihu, a young man of good understanding who acted as moderator between them, and censured both parties very freely and judiciously. He charged Job with no crime as the cause of his afflictions, but seemed to think he had not managed the dispute about them with so much calmness and submission to God as became his piety. He also endeavoured to convince him by argument drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty and unsearchable wisdom, that it is not inconsistent with his justice to lay his afflicting hand upon the best and most righteous of men; adding, that it was the duty of all men to bear such exercises, when any befall them, without murmuring or repining, and to acknowledge the justice of God therein.

Job heard all this with great attention, but made no reply, probably lest he might be drawn to utter some unguarded expression, which the hard treatment of his three friends might have extorted from him.

When they were all silent, the Lord himself took up the matter, and out of the whirlwind directed his speech to Job, wherein, after the most striking disposition of the works of the creation, he effectually convinced Job of his own weakness and inability of himself to understand the ways and designs of his mysterious providence.

This speech of the Deity, contained in chap. xxxviii-xli. most inimitably grand and sublime, representing the vast extent of the divine wisdom and power in the formation of the universe, shows, 1st. That all things in the sky, the air, the earth, and the sea, are produced and disposed in a manner far beyond the reach of human reason, wisdom, or power. 2d. As a consequence that man is not qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other being, that God may have wise and good reasons for his ways, works, and dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our duty, in all cases, to acquiesce and submit. 3d. That he who has given various natures and instincts to animals, can give being and life, when and where, and in what degree he pleases. 4th. That he is present to care for, sustain, and direct, every living thing, and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy issue out of any of his inflictions. 5th. That the wisest of men should be very cautious and modest in censuring the ways of providence.

These salutary effects seem to have been produced in holy Job in a most remarkable degree, nor can any thing display a genuine humility more forcibly than his address, 'Behold! I am vile and contemptible in comparison of thee. What

shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.'

He then proceeded to a more ample confession of the supremacy, power, and wisdom of God, to this effect: 'I know thou canst do every thing; and that no thought can be hid from thee. mightest thou ask, who he was that darkened counsel by words without knowledge? I am sensible I have uttered what I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. But henceforward I desire to learn of thee; therefore hear, I beseech thee, when I speak, and declare unto me what I ask. I have heard of thee before, by the hearing of the ear, (which gave me but a distant knowledge of thee,) but now I have obtained a more clear and certain apprehension of thee, for mine eyes have seen thee; wherefore I reprove myself for what I have done amiss, and repent in dust and ashes.'

This free and humble acknowledgment of Job was so pleasing in the sight of God, that he graciously condescended to declare himself in his favour against his friends, who by their hard censures and bitter reflections, instead of being his comforters, had proved his tormentors.

The address of Deity was to this effect, as particularly directed to Eliphaz the Temanite: 'My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore now take seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you; for his prayers will I accept; lest I deal with you as you deserve, for not speaking the truth, as my servant Job doth.'

His friends, alarmed at the menaces of an offended God, with all haste prepared a sacrifice to appease the divine vengeance; and when it was presented, God was pleased to accept Job's intercessions for them. After this, God was pleased to consider the afflicted state of his servant, and to reward his faith and piety with a more ample fortune than he possessed before his severe trials, doubling his former stock in every respect, excepting that of his children; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.

He had also seven sons, who, with three beautiful daughters, graced his table every day, and received an extensive inheritance among their brethren.

No sooner was the fame of Job's recovery, and the restoration and addition of his fortune spread abroad, than his friends and acquaintance, from all parts, came to congratulate him upon this happy change of circumstances. Nor did they come empty handed; for every one brought him a valuable present; and to make his terrestrial happiness still greater, God blessed him with a prolongation of life beyond the common extent of those times; for he lived a hundred and forty years after his being restored, which made his age above two hundred years, so that he saw an increase of his family to the fourth generation, and expired with the utmost composure and resignation, not doubting of being made a partaker of the inheritance of the faithful.

REMARKS.

The instructions particularly designed in the book of Job might not be so well understood in that age of the world, namely, that great sufferings are not always an argument of great sins, but that very good men may be very much afflicted in this world; that therefore we should not censure any under calamities, be the hand of God ever so apparent, unless the crime be likewise certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any condition, but meekly submit to his blessed will, who never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always appre-

hend it, adoring and receiving the unsearchable depths of his wise counsels, and believing that all will at the last turn to our advantage, if, like his servant Job, we persevere in faith, hope, and patience.

This was Job's real character, though not without errors. No error can be discovered in his behaviour, but those to which he was provoked by the uncharitable censure of his friends. Thus he was out upon too frequent and too strong justifications of himself, being withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and satisfactory account, why God afflicted him so severely.

God, in the issue, satisfied him that he had great and weighty reasons; and in particular by doubling his prosperity, that he designed to make him a pattern of patience and reward. Whence we may learn, that under the severest visitations, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful to the sincere and upright soul, and will amply recompense in a future state.

Thus the great point in religion, before dark and doubtful, relative to the providence of God and the sufferings of good men, is cleared up with such evidence, as can no where else be found but in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Though this point might not be so well understood before it was illustrated, yet there are several important articles of religion of which Job and his friends, and doubtless many others, had very just and clear conceptions; as the being and perfections of God; that we receive all from him, the author of our being, and disposer of all events; that he sees and orders all things in heaven and earth; that there can be no iniquity with him; that he is the friend and patron of virtue, and hates, and will punish vice and wickedness; nevertheless, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bless those who sincerely repent of their sins, and return unto him; that he is to be supremely reverenced and worshipped, as the sole sovereign of the universe, by the heavens be no more they shall not

prayers and sacrifices, by purity and integrity of heart, by justice in all our dealings, by all acts of charity, goodness, and benevolence to others, particularly to the helpless and indigent; by temperance and sobriety, curbing irregular desires and appetites; that men should not be elated and puffed up by large possessions, nor put their trust in riches; that they should avoid idolatry; that they should not wish evil to an enemy, nor rejoice in his misfortunes, much less think of murdering him; that they should abstain from adultery and fornication, from theft, rapine, and deceit; for the punishment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, and was himself one of the chief.

These and such like principles are allowed, both by Job and his friends, and therefore were the religion of the patriarchs, as indeed they are the principles of true and acceptable religion in all ages and parts of the world.

Further we may venture to affirm, that the religious in the preceding as well as subsequent ages, entertained the faith and hope of a future state. This has been the peculiar belief of all nations, from time immemorial; and it is scarce credible in the nature of the thing, that the greatest happiness of this life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length, would infallibly and totally be demolished by death, should ever become a solid principle of religion, considered as the sole reward of piety and virtue.

However, it appears, that Job expected a future world, for he had hope with regard to his condition, but not in this world; therefore his hope must be in a future state. As he absolutely despaired of any temporal deliverance, the hope he entertained of his innocence being cleared, must certainly refer to the day of judgment.

He had moreover a notion of the resurrection, as appears from chap. xiv. 12. 'So man lieth down, and riseth not: till -ver. 14. If a man die, shall he live again? Or shall a man live again after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait all the days of the time thou shalt be pleased to appoint, till my happy renovation shall come.'

If, according to Job's expression, after his skin his body also was destroyed, how could be outlive this destruction, so as to be a man prosperous and happy again in this world? Had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wishing for death would be utterly unaccountable, his tragical complaints ridiculous, and his despair of health and happiness in this world a palpable contradiction.

Upon the whole, if we set aside the doctrine of a future state, we must allow, that Job's friends spoke more worthily of God, by vindicating his providence in the exact distribution of good and evil in this life, and that Job, who asserted the contrary, misrepresented his dealings with mankind; but as the approbation of an all-wise Judge has been pronounced upon the latter, those who regard the words of eternal Truth, need no other demonstration of the certainty of a future state of reward and punishment.

It is therefore presumed that we have rendered it evident, beyond a doubt, by these strictures on the book of Job, that in the patriarchal age, there were persons eminent for piety and virtue, who worshipped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary communications from him; but that many were of a different character, wicked and ungodly men, and that idolatry, captivating the minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, spread so fast, that it threatened the total destruction of the knowledge and pure worship of God.

These instances may satisfy us, that although life and immortality are brought into the fullest light by the gospel, a future state was not unknown from the beginning, to the coming of the ever blessed Redeemer of the world. So that

awake, nor be raised out of their sleep, we may take it for a good rule, that the words life and salvation, in the Old Testament, may be understood of a future life and salvation, when the context will admit of such an interpretation.

As the book of Job is fraught with peculiar expressions, and has therefore afforded great scope for the jest and ridicule of infidels, it may not be unnecessary, nor impertinent on this occasion, humbly to offer some considerations that may direct the devout believer in the understanding of it.

1st. He that would rightly explain and fully comprehend this book, must, as much as possible, imagine himself in the same distressed, afflicted condition.

2d. It must be observed, to reconcile every circumstance, that though every daring thought or ardent expression, which occurs in the speeches of this afflicted and exasperated man, is not to be vindicated; yet as he was a great man and a prince, he may be allowed to use bold and animated language.

3d. We shall certainly judge amiss if we think every thing wrong which will not suit with the politeness of our manners, and the prevailing mode of expression with us.

4th. In judging of the character of Job, we must set the noble strains of his piety against the unguarded expressions of his sorrow, and remember, that he insists not only on his innocence, but on his sincerity.

5th. We must observe, that when his friends encouraged him to hope for a temporal deliverance, Job despaired of it, and expected his bodily disorder would terminate in death: though in the increasing heat of the dispute, they seem to drop this sentiment in their following answers, as if they supposed Job to be too bad for any favour from God; the good man howeve hoped that his character would be cleared in the day of judgment, though he was greatly concerned it could not be cleared before.

6th. It also is worthy our observation,

that after a life led in the most conscientious performance of the divine commands, his reputation should sink in the opinion of his nearest friends; and his sufferings excite the reproaches of the ignorant and profane upon his religious profession. These considerations touched him to the heart, exasperated all his sufferings, and caused him often to wish that God would bring him to his trial here, in this life, that his integrity might be vindicated, and all friends and enemies might understand the true end and design of his sufferings, so that the honour of religion might be secured.

7th. In order to reconcile some passages which appear daring and presumptuous in mortal man, we must remember, that as he could only affirm his integrity, but could give no special satisfactory reason why God should afflict him in a manner so very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding cases that were ever known in the world, it very much perplexed and embarrassed his mind, and laid him under great disadvantage in the dispute. on their account that we find him so desirous of coming to a conference as it were with his Maker, to know his mind and meaning, chap. xii. 2. Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.' The whole of the 23d chapter relates to this point, in love vain in the Lord.

which he wishes he could come to the dwelling place of God, and spread his case before him, and argue it at large; for he had turned his thoughts every way and could make nothing of it, only he was sure God knew he was an upright man. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own wisdom, for what he hath resolved to inflict, he hath accomplished, and many such things he doth of which he will not assign to man the reason.

8th. In such a noble performance, as this book has been allowed to be by the most learned and pious men in all ages, if any thing seems inconsistent or uncharacteristical, we should rather suspect our own judgment, and attribute the fault not to the writer, but to our understanding, remembering, that such sense best agrees with the subject or point in hand, which stands in the best connection with the context.

Having thus treated largely, and we humbly hope faithfully, on this much controverted book, we submit our opinion to the judgment of the serious reader, and can only add, that if our endeavours in this point shall tend to edify one believer in his most holy faith, respecting the infallible word of the ever blessed God, we shall not deem our work of labour and

THE END.















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